ELL Capstone Portfolio

Catherine E. Davis

Peabody College, Vanderbilt University

Abstract

This portfolio is a reflection upon and culmination of my work in the Master of Education (M.Ed.) program in English Language Learners (ELL) at Peabody College, Vanderbilt University. The paper is divided into three main sections: my teaching philosophy, artifact analyses, and applications to practice. My philosophy of teaching centers upon caring and authentic student-teacher relationships as the foundation of quality teaching, where the classroom is a validating and collaborative space focused on empathy, equity, and inclusivity. As an effective ELL teacher, I will seek to understand the diversity of students' and families' linguistic and cultural practices, and use this diversity to frame instruction. My teaching philosophy is informed by theories of culturally responsive care, culturally responsive teaching, translanguaging, and funds of knowledge.

The artifact analyses are divided into four professional knowledge areas: learner, the learning contexts, curriculum, and assessment. To carry out the analysis of artifacts from my past teaching experiences, I draw on the theories mentioned above as well as those of comprehensible input, scaffolded instruction, and dialogic teaching, among others. The artifacts analyzed in this paper come from a variety of sources over the course of my study at Peabody College, including a field visit to a culturally and linguistically diverse community in Nashville, a comprehensive classroom ecology plan, and a case study of an ELL student. To conclude this portfolio, I discuss how I will use the theoretical knowledge and practical experiences acquired in the ELL program to inform my teaching moving forward and continually grow as a professional. Additionally, I pose questions that merit further inquiry, both by myself and the ELL education field in general.

Table of Contents

Teaching Philosophy

We all have a teacher or two who has profoundly impacted our lives. I will never forget the encouragement, support, and kindness of my middle school Spanish teacher, Señora Bustillo, affectionately known as "Busti." Despite my fears and anxieties in learning a second language, she made me feel that she both believed in my success as a learner and cared for me as an individual. Busti not only taught me verbs and vocabulary in Spanish, but also taught me to love the language and appreciate the whole new world I had access to as an emerging bilingual. It is largely because of teachers like Busti that I have chosen to pursue teaching, with the hope of positively impacting the lives and learning of my future students through language.

I believe that the foundation of quality teaching is caring and authentic student-teacher relationships. After all, no significant learning can happen without a significant relationship (Milner et al., 2018). An optimized English Language Learner (ELL) classroom is one that grows from these connections into a validating and collaborative space. As an effective ELL teacher, I will cultivate these relationships by being empathetic, equity-oriented, and inclusive, and by drawing on students' diverse funds of knowledge. In order to provide my future multilingual learners with equitable access to high-quality instruction, I will seek to understand and value the diversity of students' and families' linguistic and cultural practices and use this diversity to frame all learning (de Jong, 2011).

Culturally Responsive Care in the Classroom and the Curriculum

Building persistent and caring student-teacher relationships is the foundation of effective teaching and learning (Gay, 2018). Students become more motivated to engage in learning when they feel that their classroom is filled with others who truly care *for*, and not merely about, them. Demonstrating care on a daily basis is a critical persistent practice that continuously reinforces

relationships as the foundation of the learning community (Milner et al., 2018). I will work to develop these deep, caring connections by getting to know my students as individuals. Some practices I will implement to accomplish this include interviewing students, giving them assignments that allow them to share their experiences and interests, and visiting sites in their communities, among others (Milner, 2011). These strategies will enable me to build a caring classroom culture and construct a curriculum that is relevant to my students' lives.

ELL classrooms are composed of individuals from a diverse array of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This vibrant diversity provides opportunities for students and teachers alike to acquire a more profound understanding of each other's cultures, languages, lives, and experiences. My future ELL classroom will serve as a validating space for all of these identities, as both the individual and the learning community are strengthened when we fully know, respect, and relate to one another. I will strive to affirm students' identities and funds of knowledge throughout the curriculum by connecting classroom learning to their lives, families, and communities. I will also validate students' identities by affirming their native languages through additive biliteracy practices, including native language use at home and in the classroom. These practices are critical, given that the intricate link between language and identity essentially equates denying students' use of their native languages to silencing their voices (de Jong, 2011).

In addition to being validating, the ELL classroom is also collaborative. The learning environment is its own community in which all members contribute equitably to its construction; every voice (and language) has a place and is heard and amplified. Dynamics of power and control should be absent from this space, replaced by opportunities for learners to work together and share their cultural and linguistic knowledge. As the teacher, I will adopt roles as a guide or

facilitator who supports students in figuring out answers for and among themselves as they share

their own lived experiences with the classroom community (Johnson & Owen, 2013).

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Effective culturally responsive ELL teachers model empathy across all aspects of their

teaching. This means that I will be constantly mindful of the impact my actions and words have

upon learners regardless of what my original intent may be (Gay, 2018). This mindfulness is

important, given that my linguistic and cultural background will likely differ from those of my

students. With informed empathy, I will better understand students as learners and as people by

learning directly from them and their own experiences, taking care to avoid making assumptions,

generalizations, or stereotypes based on their identities. Ultimately, empathy and understanding

are not transactional phenomena, but rather, teaching through empathy enriches, strengthens, and

humanizes both students and teachers.

Culturally responsive ELL instruction is also inclusive. As the teacher, I know that

students are members of families and communities that have a wealth of lived experiences that

can (and should) be honored in the classroom (Gay, 2018). I will teach to and through cultural

diversity across the entire curriculum, with the knowledge that my learners are complex,

multifaceted individuals. I will be responsive to the unique needs, goals, and interests of each

learner and finds ways to incorporate this knowledge into all aspects of classroom life. Inclusive

instruction will allow my future students to use their entire linguistic repertoire, through practices

like code-switching and translanguaging. Using the full range of cultural and linguistic

knowledge, prior experiences, and frames of reference of all students in the classroom increases

the relevance and effectiveness of their learning (Gay, 2018).

Another critical component of culturally responsive teaching is equity. In approaching pedagogy with an equity lens, I understand that each learner must receive differentiated tools and resources that are uniquely tailored to their specific needs. This differentiated instruction enables me to better assist learners in realizing their individual educational goals. In teaching with equity, I will consider how to structure lessons so that they provide multiple and varied pathways to success for diverse multilingual learners. Whereas some students learn best through reading and writing activities, others prefer visual, kinesthetic, or other alternative methods and practices (Milner et al., 2018). By presenting my future students with a variety of modalities with which to engage in course content, individuals with diverse learning preferences, needs, and goals can all experience success in our classroom. It is also important to strive for linguistic equity, in which resources, tools, and services are made available in students' native languages.

Translanguaging for Linguistic Equity

Multiple communication systems (i.e. bi- or multilingualism) can and should be a natural part of high-quality, equitable education for ELL students. One way to accomplish this is through translanguaging, which extends beyond academic content to include intellectual processing skills as well as psychological and emotional benefits (Gay, 2018). Translanguaging can be described as the process of making meaning, shaping experiences, and gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages; in the classroom, this means drawing upon all linguistic resources of a student (Lewis, Jones, & Baker, 2012). It is an "ongoing psycholinguistic process" of moving between different linguistic structures and systems and going beyond them; it creates a social space for multilinguals by combining different aspects of their experience and environment, beliefs and ideology, and cognitive and physical capacities into a coordinated and meaningful lived experience (Wei, 2011).

Even if I do not possess the same linguistic resources as my students, I will still implement translingual practices across all domains of language. With this approach, native language use is not merely incorporated into the classroom but encouraged. Such practices are consistent with the additive bilingual approach I hope to adopt in my future classrooms, in which learning English does not imply the replacement of students' first languages. Instead, English is added on to their existing native language repertoires (de Jong, 2011). When ELL students are able to access their complete repertoire of linguistic and cultural resources, they are granted the freedom to talk in the classroom and reach their fullest potentials as learners and as individuals.

Research has shown that heritage language proficiency correlates positively with higher academic English performance, especially when the former is used as a vehicle to facilitate the latter (Gay, 2018). More specifically, well-developed literacy skills in a first language can facilitate second language literacy development in areas like word recognition, vocabulary, and comprehension, among others. Native language use in the ELL classroom can also bridge home to school differences in communication styles and patterns that in turn improve the engagement, motivation, and classroom participation of ELL students (Gay, 2018). There is an incredibly strong link between language, identity, and learning; I will be cognizant of this relationship and of what can happen to students' identities and learning when their language use is restricted.

Knowing Students and their Communities: Funds of Knowledge

Funds of knowledge are the historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being (Moll et al., 1992). It is important that I learn how funds of knowledge are expressed in my students' lives. To access these myriad literacies, I will engage in community and home visits. These visits

will allow me to get a first-hand view of students' lives outside of the classroom and also provide

insight into existing funds of knowledge that I can incorporate into my curriculum and pedagogy.

Valuing students' home and community culture and language resources is a foundation

for empathetic and respectful teaching and engaged learning (Uccelli & Galloway, 2017). I will

also use connections with communities and families to better understand my students' linguistic

histories. As a reflection of how students use language in daily life, these histories can provide

the basis for relevant and effective instruction (de Jong, 2011). Additionally, by getting to know

communities and families better, I can invite them into the classroom to teach or facilitate

lessons in culturally responsive ways using their own knowledge, skills, and experiences. This

will allow students to feel pride in their own culture while also exposing other learners to new

ways of thinking and expression. Weaving linguistic, cultural, and familial resources throughout

the curriculum communicates to students that they do not have to divest themselves of these

things to succeed in our ELL classroom (Salazar, 2013). Ultimately, funds of knowledge bridge

home and school together and enhance opportunities for students to learn (Valenzuela, 1999).

At the center of a quality ELL classroom is caring and authentic relationships. From these

connections a validating and collaborative classroom community is constructed. It is through

lenses of empathy, equity, and inclusion that I will incorporate my future students' funds of

knowledge in the classroom to best serve their needs, interests, and goals. I will engage in

practices that are committed to systematically integrating linguistic and cultural diversity into

every aspect of classroom life (de Jong, 2011). In turn, my students will connect what they are

learning in the classroom to their real lives and those of others in their communities. Ultimately,

as a quality ELL teacher, I will be a facilitator of learning who scaffolds a collaborative process

of knowledge construction using the diverse linguistic and cultural resources of the classroom.

Artifact Analysis

Professional Knowledge Area 1: Learner

The first professional knowledge area concerns the *Learner.* In order to provide
multilingual learners with equitable, high-quality instruction, every aspect of classroom life is to
be informed by the linguistic and cultural practices of students, their families, and their
communities (de Jong, 2011). These diverse practices, also known as funds of knowledge
(Bazron et al., 2005; Moll et al., 1992), are used to frame all learning. With this student-centered
approach, the learning environment becomes an optimized space where the entirety of learners'
linguistic and cultural repertoires are honored and amplified (Milner et al., 2018). Learners, in
active collaboration with the teacher, construct why, what, and how the learning experience takes
shape in their classroom.

TESOL Domain 2: Culture

Learners enter classrooms with a wealth of culturally-embedded information and
experiences that they have accrued throughout their lives (Herrera et al., 2012). The term *culture*
can be defined in many ways, but generally refers to the dynamic system of social values,
behavioral standards, views, and beliefs held by a population at a given time that is used to give
order and meaning to lived experience (Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991). Culture encompasses
the perspectives, practices, and products—both tangible and intangible—of a community (The
National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). Education itself, including curriculum,
instruction, and assessment, is a sociocultural process.

In the English Language Learner (ELL) classroom, there exists a bidirectional
relationship between language and culture, wherein culture mediates the acquisition and
expression of language, while language simultaneously influences and molds an individual's

cultural identity (Flippo et al., 1997). Thus, ELL teachers are uniquely tasked with first understanding the different cultures present in the classroom and then bridging these diverse cultural and linguistic systems together into communally-constructed learning experiences (Gay, 2018). As I stated in my teaching philosophy, there is an incredibly strong link between learning and culture, and language serves as the primary vehicle for expressing cultural perspectives and participating in social practices (The National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). Consequently, by knowing and understanding the pivotal role that culture plays in students' lives, ELL teachers facilitate language learning through a collaborative process of knowledge construction using learners' diverse funds of culturally-embedded knowledge. By creating a classroom community centered upon learners and their cultural and linguistic resources, students feel empowered, engaged, validated, and cared for (Gay, 2018).

   Artifact A. The *Community Literacies Investigation* paper and visual map is the culmination of a field visit to the Nolensville Pike area of Nashville and an interview with the Adult Education Coordinator of the local non-profit organization Conexión Américas (see Appendix A). Nolensville Pike is a culturally and linguistically diverse community located about twenty minutes southeast of the Peabody campus. Conexión Américas has been serving the area since 2002, with a mission of building a welcoming community and creating opportunities for Latinx families through a wide array of services including adult English classes, business start-up consultations, and college readiness programs (among many others). I visited various locations on Nolensville Pike, including Casa Azafrán, where Conexión Américas and several other local non-profits are housed, and the neighboring Azafrán Park. I also visited a few locally-owned businesses, with a goal of understanding the myriad literacies and funds of knowledge present in the community.

Although the *Community Literacies Investigation* was not conducted in a school or classroom, it provided me with many insights that I will incorporate with my future learners. Much of the discussion during the interview with the Adult Education Coordinator at Conexión Américas centered around the importance of having a comprehensive knowledge of students and their background and developing "cultural competencies." I interpreted this as a reflection of many of the tenets of culturally responsive teaching, and in particular of the ideas of culturally responsive care (Gay, 2018; Milner et al., 2018). Demonstrating culturally responsive care, as I discussed in my teaching philosophy, means understanding the cultural influences on learners' behaviors and the mental ecology of the classroom, then using this knowledge to guide action in the learning environment (Gay, 2018). To build these caring spaces, ELL teachers are tasked with developing a classroom culture that is both nurturing and rigorous for all learners (Milner et al., 2018). It is in these caring and high rigor classrooms that individual student learning and academic achievement is best supported.

The artifact discusses how engaging in community and home visits enables ELL teachers to first identify and then incorporate learners' funds of knowledge in the classroom. As I explained, "students can feel a sense of pride that their communities are being valued and respected, given that particularly for students from immigrant families, feelings of belonging, legitimacy, and membership often color learning experiences" (Jimenez et al., 2009). Ultimately, the more that learners are able to see themselves reflected in curriculum, instruction, and assessment, the more effective the learning experience will be for everyone (Milner et al., 2018). In a culturally responsive, student-centered classroom, teachers know their individual learners in authentic ways (through activities like home visits) and use that knowledge to build relationships amongst the diverse individuals sharing these spaces. As I wrote in the artifact, "linguistic and

cultural differences are not barriers but rather pathways to new communal and collective understandings."

As mentioned previously, the primary shortcoming of the *Community Literacies Investigation* is that it involved visiting a community in general as opposed to a specific school or classroom. Thus, one could say that my findings here are more theoretical than practical. While this is certainly a valid point, I do not believe it makes the lessons I learned from this experience any less valuable. Much of what I saw in visiting Nolensville Pike and speaking with a local organization proves the necessity of culturally responsive, learner-centered pedagogies in ELL classrooms. Namely, that a vast array of community literacies and funds of knowledge can be present within a single learner (and certainly within a single classroom), and that these must be honored and amplified if effective learning is to occur (Milner et al., 2018). If I have the opportunity to visit the area again, I would like to also spend time in classrooms and in a school serving local students to see how ELL teachers are putting these ideas and theories into practice.

A visit to any given section of Nolensville Pike reveals its vibrant multiculturalism and multilingualism. A Mexican-owned tire shop, a Kurdish supermarket, and a Honduran bakery give visitors a small glimpse of what locals have been cognizant of for a long time: there are numerous funds of knowledge represented in these spaces. Just as these cultural and linguistic resources pervade the community, so are they both present in and shape learners. It is the job of effective, equity-oriented ELL teachers to use learners' diverse ways of knowing to build bridges between and among students to facilitate new pathways of connection and knowledge construction. When this happens, a supportive, rigorous, and culturally and linguistically responsive learning environment is created (Gay, 2018; Milner, 2010).

Professional Knowledge Area 2: The Learning Contexts

The second professional knowledge area concerns *The Learning Contexts*. This refers to the environment in which learning happens—in many cases, a classroom within a school or an educational institution (though this conceptualization has shifted dramatically over the past year). Additionally, the learning contexts also refer to the communities (people) and societies (places) in which learning is taking place. This means that the educational experience is largely shaped by the sociocultural context in which it occurs (Gay, 2018). Thus, in order to best serve ELL students, the learning environment is informed by and reflective of the lived realities, experiences, and practices of each learner. When this happens, the ELL classroom becomes a collaborative, inclusive, and equitable space of meaning-making based upon the diverse linguistic and cultural funds of knowledge present.

TESOL Domain 3: Planning, Implementing, and Managing Instruction

ELL teachers often possess the dual responsibility of teaching both content and language, frequently to learners from diverse backgrounds and at a variety of language levels (Echevarría et al., 2013). Amidst so many variables, quality learning can only take place when teachers plan for instruction that is both structured and specific while also leaving room for plenty of learner input. This requires modifications that take into account the unique linguistic needs of ELL students in order to make instruction meaningful (August & Shanahan, 2006; Goldenberg, 2008). It is imperative, however, that these modifications represent a "supporting-up" of learners, rather than a "dumbing-down" of the curriculum (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005). For classroom learning to be most effective, teaching and learning tasks should be slightly ahead of or above learners' current levels to complete alone, but within their abilities to complete when instructional scaffolds are made available to them (Krashen, 1982; Mercer, 1994).

Culturally and linguistically responsive classrooms are collaborative spaces in which

every member has a pivotal role to play in the co-construction of knowledge. As stated in my

teaching philosophy, dynamics of power and control should be absent from learning

environments and replaced by opportunities for learners and teachers alike to collaborate and

share their funds of knowledge. Consequently, ELL teachers serve as guides or facilitators who

support students in solving problems and arriving at solutions for and amongst themselves

(Milner et al., 2018). Planning should also be inclusive, creating space for students to share their

complete linguistic and cultural repertoires with one another in order to increase the relevance

and effectiveness of instruction (Gay, 2018). Finally, equity in planning and instruction means

each learner receives differentiated tools and resources with which they can engage in scaffolded

meaning-making experiences in the learning environment (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005).

Artifact A. The *Classroom Ecology Plan* is a comprehensive collection of twenty distinct

strategies, activities, policies, and approaches that I intend to adopt in my future ELL classroom

(see Appendix B). The plan is divided into sections that each focus on a strand of caring (Gay,

2018): students care for themselves, students care for others, and teachers care for students.

Because the artifact contains so many elements, for the purposes of this analysis I will focus on

two activities that I believe relate most to the TESOL domain of *Planning, Implementing, and*

Managing Instruction. The first element is "Opening Activities: The First Five" (Appendix B, p.

56). These activities are brief (five minute) opportunities to build community and rapport within

the learning environment. There is one activity for each day of the week: Motivation Monday,

Teamwork Tuesday, Word Wednesday, Throwback Thursday, and Friend Friday. The second

element from the *Classroom Ecology Plan* that I will analyze is "Our Essential Questions"

(Appendix B, p. 67). It contains a list of the central questions that will serve as a general frame

for both what content is to be taught and how learning will be accomplished in the classroom

(adapted from Haberman, 2010).

The "First Five" opening activities serve myriad purposes. They provide a "warm-up" to

get students ready to speak English and to feel more comfortable doing so, while also creating

opportunities for everyone to participate equitably and setting the tone for the day. As I wrote in

the *Classroom Ecology Plan,* "classes that start with this kind of routine and structure can also

result in more instructional time, which correlates with increased academic achievement"

(Harris, 2016). The use of consistent routines also adds a degree of predictability to the

classroom schedule. When students know what to expect, they can feel more comfortable and

more willing to participate as a result. The structure of the daily activities also provides multiple

avenues for participation, whether it be as a whole class, in small groups, in pairs, or

individually, to equitably accommodate for diverse learning preferences (Milner et al., 2018).

The content of the activities allows students to share their backgrounds and experiences with one

another, which fosters an ethos of inclusion and caring in the learning environment (Gay, 2018).

The *Classroom Ecology Plan* also contains a list of essential questions that will be used

to frame learning in a way that makes it relevant to students and their lived experiences ("Our

Essential Questions"). They include items such as "are we involved with issues we consider to be

vital concerns in our lives?" and "are we encouraged to question and critically examine content?"

When engaging in planning, I will always refer back to these questions to make sure they are

being appropriately addressed in both unit and lesson plans and across all topics/themes. These

questions are deliberately presented using the "we" pronoun as a reflection of the active,

collaborative co-construction of knowledge that is taking place in the learning environment. This

allows learners to develop increased agency over their own educational experience (Cammarota

& Romero, 2006). As I wrote in the artifact, with the essential questions as a guide "teachers can select and present content in a way that that attends to the learning experiences of the particular group of students in the classroom" and reflects the full diversity of learners' experiences.

While the *Classroom Ecology Plan* does exemplify the TESOL domain and my teaching philosophy, it does not address comprehensible input and scaffolding. These are two critical aspects of planning and instruction that must be present for effective teaching and learning to occur in multilevel ELL classrooms. With comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985), teachers consciously modify instruction to make it more understandable through a variety of means based on students' English proficiency. This includes using appropriate speech (rate, enunciation, complexity), explaining classroom tasks in a clear, step-by-step manner (with demonstrations), and making content concepts accessible using various techniques (gestures, models, repetition) (Echevarría et al., 2013). Effective scaffolding happens when teachers plan, select, and sequence tasks in the learning environment that take account of the different levels and abilities of specific groups of students (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005). Scaffolded instruction creates "handover," in which students can transfer their understandings and skills to new tasks in the learning contexts, allowing them to become increasingly independent learners (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005).

The learning contexts refer to both the physical and sociocultural environment in which the collaborative process of meaning-making is occurring. ELL students experience success in these spaces when they are supported by planning and instruction that is scaffolded with ample comprehensible input while also engaging them in challenging learning tasks (Echevarría et al., 2013; Hammond & Gibbons, 2005). The same care that effective ELL teachers put into planning and instruction must also be present in curriculum design, with special attention to issues of equity and accessibility for learners at all language proficiency levels.

Professional Knowledge Area 3: Curriculum

The third Professional Knowledge area concerns *Curriculum*. Quality curriculum design is the first step to ensuring quality planning, implementation, and management of instruction in the classroom, which in turn enables effective content and language learning for students. The curriculum design process is complex and multi-faceted, beginning with an analysis of the needs, the environment, and the research and theory of language learning (Nation & Macalister, 2010). Having conducted these analyses, effective ELL teachers then create course goals that are placed at the center of the curriculum design process. From these goals, teachers select and sequence content, decide on the format and presentation of the course, and determine how the course content and goals will be monitored and assessed. The curriculum design process concludes (or rather, begins again) with evaluation, in which all aspects of a course are judged to see if goals have been met and where improvement is needed (Nation & Macalister, 2010).

TESOL Domain 1: Language

Language is not just a medium for communicating ideas, but also a primary tool for forming new ways of thinking and knowing (Vygotsky, 1968). It is through language that learners negotiate and construct new meanings, both in the learning environment and in everyday life. In other words, language is a social semiotic system, from which meaning is constructed and derived in-context (Halliday & Hasan, 1985). Effective ELL teachers know that language learning is a contextually-dependent enterprise. Thus, students must learn the kinds of language that enable them to participate in the daily situations they encounter. These considerations are an important part of the curricular design process. Quality curriculum in ELL classrooms examines the hybrid nature of languages, as reflected in the fluidity of communication systems as they are influenced by contextual factors (Canagarajah, 2006).

The hybridity of languages lends itself to the use of multiple communication systems in the classroom. As I wrote in my teaching philosophy, in striving for linguistic equity, resources, tools, and services (as directed by the curriculum) are made available to students in their native languages. A culturally and linguistically responsive curriculum also allows for the judicious use of strategies such as translanguaging and code-switching. Translanguaging is the process of going back and forth from one language to another to communicate with different individuals for different purposes (García, 2009). Code-switching, on the other hand, refers to the simultaneous use of two grammatical systems (de Jong, 2011). Learning English as a second or additional language involves a two-way exchange between linguistic systems and as such students' first languages can and should be used to facilitate the acquisition of English (Escamilla & Hopewell, 2010). When students can access their full repertoire of linguistic resources, course content becomes linguistically equitable and culturally relevant.

Artifact A. The *English Language Learners in Schools and Classrooms* paper is a reflection on videos of instruction from ELL classrooms (see Appendix C). For this analysis I will focus primarily on one video, *Small Town Big Dreams* (Coady, 2019), that examines an elementary school in Florida with a significant ELL student population. Initially, the school attempted an inclusive approach in which ELL students were spread across multiple mainstream classrooms with teachers with no specific training on curriculum design, instruction, or assessment of ELL students. Teachers and administrators realized that these students were "falling through the cracks," and consequently created a self-contained, sheltered ELL classroom where current and former ELL students with similar language backgrounds were placed together (Coady, 2019). In this classroom, students were able to use their first language (Spanish) to translate unfamiliar words and concepts, often in a collaborative manner with their peers.

Native language use in the classroom enables learners to access their full range of linguistic resources. As a fourth-grade ELL student featured in the video explained, "I feel more comfortable in this class because I can…talk the language I came from…forgetting your language and talk in another one that's not yours, that just doesn't make sense" (Coady, 2019). This reveals the many implications of first language use in the learning environment, both in terms of second language (English) acquisition and in terms of students' identity development. As I wrote in the artifact, native language use can help bridge home to school differences in communication styles and patterns, which in turn improves student engagement, motivation, and participation (Gay, 2018). As I explained in my teaching philosophy, additive biliteracy practices (such as translanguaging) are critical given the particularly powerful link between language and identity. In many cases, denying students' use of their native languages essentially equates to silencing their voices (de Jong, 2011).

Translanguaging is a dynamic process of meaning-making in which students gain new understandings through the use of two languages (Lewis et al., 2012). As I wrote in *English Language Learners in Schools and Classrooms*, by favorably engaging and inquiring into students' language practices, ELL teachers can foster translingual approaches across all language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and help students "develop the dispositions and openness necessary to do so" (Zapata & Laman, 2016). ELL students, as emergent bilinguals, tend to outperform monolingual students on metalinguistic awareness tasks as the development of two languages heightens their sensitivity to language (Menyuk & Brisk, 2005). From this, we see that an important aspect of curricular design is creating opportunities for students to incorporate their native language in the classroom through processes like translanguaging. Other additive approaches, such as encouraging native language use in the

home, allow students to develop deeper cross-lingual understandings and cultivate their metalinguistic awareness.

During the needs and environmental analysis stage of the curriculum design process, ELL teachers can engage in community visits, and if possible, home visits as well. As I wrote in the artifact, community visits can lead to a more sophisticated understanding of students, their experiences, and their funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992) that can be incredibly helpful in articulating goals and designing and sequencing course content. Establishing connections with students and their families, communities, or other teachers who have worked with students previously also allow for a better understanding of learners' linguistic histories. As stated in my teaching philosophy, as a reflection of how students use language in daily life, these histories can serve to improve the relevance and effectiveness of instruction (de Jong, 2011). Thus, when ELL teachers engage in community visits and encourage translingual approaches to learning, the curriculum and resulting instruction become linguistically and culturally responsive.

The *English Language Learners in Schools and Classrooms* paper could have been strengthened by the inclusion of the "four strands" of curriculum content design as identified by Nation & Macalister (2010): meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning, and fluency development. ELL classrooms should provide a balanced range of opportunities for learning; these four strands serve to assure this balance by each receiving an equal amount of time in the learning environment (Nation, 2007). ELL teachers can evaluate this balance by keeping a list of all learning tasks, recording how much time was spent on the task, then sorting the activity into the strand under which it falls and seeing how much instructional time was spent per strand (Nation & Macalister, 2010). This provides a holistic evaluation of the curriculum and serves as a basis for planning, implementing, and managing future instruction.

TESOL Domain 3: Planning, Implementing, and Managing Instruction

Curriculum design is an ongoing process with several intricately connected parts that must be continuously evaluated and reevaluated. Once ELL teachers have engaged in a needs analysis, an environment analysis, and have determined the most important principles of English language learning and teaching to inform their pedagogy, they apply this information to the implementation and management of instruction in the learning environment (Nation & Macalister, 2010). While engaging in this part of the process, teachers select the techniques, activities, and tasks (the format and presentation) that will be used to maximize student learning across all domains of language. A careful analysis of these pedagogical tools using the "four strands" (Nation, 2007) ensures that instruction is effectively balanced between listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English.

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) provides language teachers with world-readiness standards for language learners, divided into the five "C" goal areas of Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities (The National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). As reflected in my teaching philosophy, all five of these goal areas are important in culturally and linguistically responsive classrooms. However, when considering quality curriculum design in the effective implementation and management of instruction, Communication is paramount. Communication is at the heart of language study, whether it be "face-to-face, in writing, or across centuries through the reading of literature" (Cutshall, 2012). This goal area is divided into three distinct communicative modes: interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational (The National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). Effective instruction for ELL students is implemented and managed in such a way that learners are given ample opportunities to engage in all modes.

Artifact B. I will once again use elements from the *Classroom Ecology Plan* as artifacts for the TESOL domain of *Planning, Implementing, and Managing Instruction*. As mentioned previously, the plan includes many different practices that I hope to implement with my future learners. The two elements I will be analyzing here are "Weekly Journal Reflections" (Appendix B, p. 57) and "News Worthy: Restorative Circle Processes" (Appendix B, p. 75). These activities are closely interconnected; the former opens the week and the latter closes it. With the "Weekly Journal Reflections," learners are given a prompt from the teacher related to course content that they reflect upon and respond to in writing. At the end of the week, the "Restorative Circle Processes" serve as the space where students share what they wrote about in their journal reflections with the whole class (adapted from the circle processes of Amstutz & Mullet, 2005).

As I wrote in the artifact, the weekly journal reflections give learners the opportunity to share their experiences and interests in authentic ways. This is an important part of cultivating the caring relationships (Milner, 2011) that I discussed in my teaching philosophy. Because many students in ELL classrooms are often coming from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, responses to prompts can reflect the diverse culturally-informed norms, practices, and values of each learner. As I wrote in my teaching philosophy, both the individual and the learning community becomes strengthened when all members can fully know, respect, and find ways to relate to one another. Journal prompts are designed to explicitly connect course content to students' lives, thus increasing the relevance of the learning (Gay, 2018). The reflections serve multiple functions in bridging content to lived experience while also creating structured opportunities to develop writing skills in English. Because this is a weekly recurring activity, students become more familiar and comfortable with the routine of writing and continuously strengthen their abilities in this area as the course progresses.

The circle process as the weekly closing activity also serves many important functions as an instructional strategy. First, it promotes strong relationships and a sense of community among all learners as they develop a common understanding of co-constructed values and ideas (Milner et al., 2018). At the outset of the course, the teacher is the likely facilitator of this process; however, as the course progresses and students become more familiar with the educational routine (Zehr, 2015), they can take on more responsibility as either a facilitator or a participant. As a result, students develop increased agency over their own learning (Cammarota & Romero, 2006). Because all learners are expected to participate to the extent they are able, the activity provides a structured, scaffolded space for development in the listening and speaking domains. As I wrote in the *Classroom Ecology Plan*, through this process "everyone in the community takes on the role of a teacher and a learner through sharing and listening with others."

The weekly journal reflections and corresponding circle process provide the opportunity for ELL teachers to engage in dialogic teaching (Reznitskaya, 2012; Alexander, 2008; Paul, 1986). In dialogic classrooms, teachers and students alike collaboratively engage in the generation and evaluation of content in order to "gain a fuller appreciation of the world, [them]selves, and one another" (Burbules, 1993). Key practices that teachers implement in dialogic classrooms include sharing authority over the content and form of discourse with students, posing higher-order questions that inspire meaningful inquiry, engaging in meta-linguistic reflection, and engaging students in the collaborative co-construction of knowledge (Reznitskaya, 2012). Dialogic teaching is reflective of the social-constructivist theories of learning (Vygotsky, 1968) that view students as active meaning-makers. Ultimately, when considering the implementation and management of instruction ELL teachers must examine and

expand their repertoires of language practices, deliberately selecting the tools, resources, and technologies that most authentically suit the learners and their contexts (Reznitskaya, 2012).

The journal reflections and circle process from the *Classroom Ecology Plan* give students major responsibilities in the process and substance of learning; they are encouraged to ask questions, react to their classmates' ideas, and take ownership of their language learning. With these activities, there is a pedagogical goal of focusing on the process of thinking itself (metacognition), thus engaging students in forming new "habits of mind" that encourage meaningful inquiry (Reznitskaya, 2012). The principles of dialogic teaching can be adopted across the curriculum and with a variety of activities to facilitate the learning of both language and content. While this approach may seem demanding, particularly for ELL students at beginning proficiency levels, it is important to keep in mind that for learning to occur language must be both comprehensible and just beyond learners' current ability levels (Krashen, 1982). Through written journal reflections and circle process interactions, students are provided with the nesesary opportunities to use language both productively and receptively (Long, 1996).

The artifact would be strengthened by a more balanced inclusion of the three communicative modes (interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational) (The National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). In their current form, the journal reflections and circle process involve primarily the interpersonal mode of communication, in which meaning is actively negotiated among individuals (Cutshall, 2012). The activities could also be considered presentational, given that students first write their responses to prompts in journals and then share with the rest of the classroom community. However, almost no interpretive communication is involved. To remedy this, teachers can identify texts or videos where individuals discuss the same topics as those addressed by the reflection prompts and have learners analyze these

resources. This would also increase student engagement in the reading domain, which is largely absent in the current form of the activities. Ultimately, instruction that incorporates the learning of language as a system with meaningful and authentic multimodal interactions will lead to the most effective learning for ELL students.

Quality instruction in ELL classrooms is balanced across language domains, providing students with opportunities to engage in meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning, and fluency development (Nation, 2007; Nation & Macalister, 2010). In crafting a culturally and linguistically responsive curriculum, ELL teachers design learning tasks that are rigorous (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005), relevant to students' lives and experiences (Gay, 2018; Milner et al., 2018), and authentic for the communicative contexts (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). Simultaneously, teachers are cognizant of how assessment and evaluation can be used to focus instruction in order to maximize its effectiveness (Sandrock, 2011).

Professional Knowledge Area 4: Assessment

The fourth and final professional knowledge area concerns *Assessment*. Broadly, Mousavi (2009) defines assessment as "appraising or estimating the level or magnitude of some attribute of a person" (p. 35). Assessment procedures most accurately reflect students' "attributes" when they are authentic, appropriate for the educational context, and provide opportunities for teachers to offer constructive feedback to learners (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). There are a wide variety of types and purposes for assessment; they may be formal or informal, formative or summative, and norm-referenced or criterion-referenced, among others. ELL teachers are continuously challenged to create authentic and valid assessments that simulate real-world interactions for their students (Leung & Lewkowicz, 2006).

TESOL Domain 4: Assessment

In the ELL classroom, assessment is an ongoing process that includes a vast range of methods and techniques beyond just testing. As Gottlieb (2016) explains, if assessments are reliable, valid, and fair for all learners throughout instruction, then they can serve as a "bridge to educational equity" for students (p. 1). As both the number and diversity of ELL students increases across classrooms and educational spaces, so does the need for linguistically and culturally responsive education, including assessments. As I discussed in my teaching philosophy, in linguistically and culturally responsive classrooms, teachers act as mediators who help their students build bridges from the unknown to the known, while also being sensitive to the sociocultural contexts of the learning (Gottlieb, 2016). By understanding the central role of culture and language in my future students' lives, I can design assessments that align with the cultural values of learners' families and communities and allow students to fully demonstrate their funds of knowledge (Bazron et al., 2005; González et al., 2005).

Culturally responsive assessments reflect the importance of students' cultures in every aspect of the ELL classroom and ensure that students' languages, lives, and experiences are continuously represented across all dimensions of instruction. In these spaces, ELL students' existing linguistic and cultural resources are valued, enhanced, and incorporated into standards-based instruction and assessment (Saifer et al., 2011). One of the biggest obstacles faced by ELL teachers today is how to construct adequate and authentic standards and performance-based assessments that exclude cultural and linguistic biases (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). Linguistic equity in learning and assessment is achievement when the full diversity of the ELL classroom is promoted and respected by all members of the educational community, often fostered through deep and meaningful personal connections among its members (Gottlieb, 2016).

Developing these connections is a central part of my philosophy of teaching, and they can be

cultivated using "alternative" culturally and linguistically responsive assessment tools such as

portfolios, journals, and self and peer assessments (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019).

      Artifact A. The *Case Study of an English Learner* paper analyzes the oral abilities of an

adult English Language Learner (ELL) student in terms of pragmatics, phonology, grammar

(morphology and syntax), and semantics (see Appendix D). This synthesis was based on three

separate conversations between the learner and I over the course of a semester. Our

conversations covered a wide variety of topics and lasted from thirty to sixty minutes each. Prior

to each meeting I developed a list of questions to ask the learner, ranging from her experience

and motivations for learning English to traditions in her home country of Colombia. After each

meeting I transcribed our conversations and analyzed the learners' speaking abilities according to

the areas mentioned above. I also analyzed two short pieces of her writing (one formal and one

informal) to measure their morphological and syntactic complexity.

      In order to assess the learners' current stage of second language acquisition, I used the

Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM). This assessment tool is not necessarily a

test, but rather a rating scale that allows teachers to evaluate their students' command of oral

language on the basis of what they continuously observe in a variety of situations. It considers

five areas of oral language: comprehension, fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary,

with a possible score ranging from one to five in each section and a total possible composite

score from five to twenty-five (see Appendix E). According to the SOLOM, a composite score of

approximately nineteen to twenty can be considered "proficient." This score represents whether a

student can complete oral language tasks typically expected for learners at a given grade or

proficiency level.

In many ways I feel that the *Case study of an English Learner* paper using the SOLOM exemplifies a culturally and linguistically responsive assessment. It was authentic and contextually appropriate (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019) given that the student was demonstrating her oral abilities while engaging in conversation on topics and themes relevant to her life. Not only did the learner show how she was able to respond to questions that she is likely to encounter in the real world, but she was also able to pose questions back to the teacher/assessor (me) and demonstrate her pragmatics skills (Yule, 2017; Dawson & Phelan, 2016). The SOLOM also looks at oral language abilities comprehensively and continuously, meaning that these domains are assessed on an ongoing basis in a variety of contexts (Leung & Lewkowicz, 2006). This variety lends both authenticity and validity to the assessment tool. Finally, because the learner and I were able to connect personally and establish a friendship across the course of our interactions (Gottlieb, 2016), she felt comfortable enough to share some of her cultural resources and funds of knowledge with me (Bazron et al., 2005; Moll et al., 1992).

Despite the strengths of this kind of assessment, it could be improved moving forward. First, the assessment was limited to oral language abilities (including both listening and speaking); there was very little analysis of writing skills and none of reading abilities. Thus, while it is a comprehensive assessment, it only serves to evaluate oral language use. Second, it could be challenging for some ELL teachers to replicate if they have large classes. The number of times and variety of interactions it requires necessitates a significant investment of time on the part of the instructor that simply may not be possible in highly populated classrooms. A final and major limitation is that I did not have the opportunity to give constructive feedback to the learner (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019), despite the fact that the paper includes an entire section on instructional recommendations in each language area that was analyzed. Individualized feedback,

both oral and written, is an incredibly important tool for learners to receive to be able to improve their language abilities (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). It is also imperative that learners are in turn required to do something with this feedback in order to demonstrate language growth and improve their quality of language use (Chandler, 2003).

There are many "nontraditional" or "alternative" assessments that allow students to incorporate feedback and show their understandings, knowledge, and abilities in authentic ways. Some examples of these types of assessments include role-plays, skits, poetry, self-evaluations, journaling, student-led conferences, and cooperative group projects, among others (Milner et al., 2018). These assessments enable learners to demonstrate their skills across all domains of language. Whereas role-plays, skits, or conferences focus more on listening and speaking skills, journaling and poetry assess learners' progress in reading and writing.

In a linguistically equitable ELL classroom, students are permitted to use their native languages as a starting point for these assessments (Gay, 2018). If all members of a project group share the same first language, they can be encouraged to plan and draft their work in their native language if they wish to do so. This way, students utilize all of their linguistic and cultural resources and assessments reflect their full range of abilities. As Gay (2018) explains, "there is no *one right* curriculum design, teaching style, and assessment procedure for all students" (p. 160). Ultimately, achieving equity of educational opportunities lies in using a variety of assessment procedures that are responsive to learners' cultural heritages and personal experiences (Gay, 2018).

Assessment of the material in a language course should be based upon a careful consideration of the learners (Nation & Macalister, 2010), their unique needs, goals, and interests (Milner et al., 2018), and the myriad funds of knowledge that they are bringing into the

classroom (Bazron et al., 2005; Moll et al., 1992). In doing this, effective ELL teachers create

culturally and linguistically responsive assessments that accurately reflect the full range of

students' language abilities in authentic ways. When assessments are reliable, fair, and varied,

they become bridges to linguistic and educational equity for all learners (Gottlieb, 2016).

Applications to Practice: Implications and Future Considerations

One of the most rewarding aspects of being a teacher is that the learning never stops. With every lesson plan, pedagogical decision, and student interaction, something new is learned that can be applied to future teaching. Just as ELL students are constantly growing and improving their language abilities, so are teachers continuously cultivating their practice. My personal teaching philosophy is centered upon cultural and linguistic responsiveness in all aspects of classroom life—the learner, the learning contexts, curriculum, and assessment. It is my belief that caring and authentic student-teacher relationships are the foundation of quality learning and teaching. As an effective ELL teacher, I will develop these relationships through lenses of empathy, equity, inclusivity, and collaboration. To provide students with high-quality instruction, I will seek to understand the diverse cultural and linguistic funds of knowledge of my students, their families, and their communities. This diversity will then be used to frame all learning. My philosophy of teaching is informed by the theories of culturally responsive care (Gay, 2018), culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2018; Milner et al., 2018), translanguaging (Lewis et al, 2012; Wei, 2011), and funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992).

My analysis of the professional knowledge area the *Learner* exemplified much of what I discussed in my teaching philosophy, particularly the emphasis on students' funds of knowledge and learner-centered pedagogy. There is an incredibly strong link between learners, their language, and their culture; it is largely though language that culture is experienced. As an ELL teacher focused on equity and inclusion, I will work to first understand the different practices, perspectives, and cultures present in the classroom, and then help learners connect these experiences together to collaboratively co-construct new meanings. By fully knowing my students and their backgrounds, I can care *for* them in culturally responsive ways (Gay, 2018).

Authentic knowledge of my future learners can be acquired in many ways, beginning with engaging in home and community visits (Milner, 2011). While this step is incredibly important, I can foresee many challenges to enacting this in the future. First, depending on the number of students I have, it may be impossible to visit all of them in a timely manner. Second, students and families may not even want me visiting their homes. If home visits are not possible, I can at least make introductory phone or Zoom calls to get a better sense of learners outside of the learning environment and perhaps more insights into their funds of knowledge. While this may not be as informative as an in-person visit, I feel it is a viable alternative. Another challenge that I envision for the future is once I have all this knowledge, how to authentically incorporate it into all aspects of the learning environment. More specifically, with so much cultural and linguistic diversity in the ELL classroom, how can I make sure that all learners' cultures and languages are being represented equitably across the curriculum and instruction? This is a question that I will continue to grapple with and investigate as I gain more theoretical knowledge and practical experience in ELL education.

In my analysis of *The Learning Contexts*, I realized that I have a lot of room to grow as a teacher in terms of planning for differentiated instruction. While equity is a big part of my teaching philosophy, by analyzing the artifacts, I was able to develop a more specific view of how I can actually implement equitable practices in the classroom that best serve ELL students at a variety of proficiency levels. Two important theories in this area are comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985; Echevarría et al., 2013) and structured scaffolding (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005). Planning for instruction with these theories in mind will allow me to "support-up" learners and create lessons that are both rigorous and scaffolded (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005). The challenge for me moving forward is to find and work within students' Zone of Proximal

Development, or ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978), where learners are able to complete difficult tasks when given the appropriate scaffolds. These task-specific supports are designed in such a way that they help learners independently complete the same or similar tasks later in new contexts (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005).

As I mentioned in my teaching philosophy, equity is an important aspect of culturally responsive teaching. With equitable instruction, multiple and varied pathways to success are created that accommodate for diverse learning preferences and proficiency levels (Milner et al., 2018). In my future equity-centered classroom, I will tailor scaffolds specifically to students or groups of students, with extensive comprehensible input. For example, with learners at beginning levels of English proficiency, I can modify my speech by using language that is straightforward and clear, paraphrasing and repeating myself to enhance understanding, and pointing out cognates (when appropriate) (Echevarría et al., 2013). I can also make sure that students are given models for processes, tasks, and assignments, while providing various modalities through which learners can express their understandings of information and concepts (i.e. orally or written). Ultimately, the most effective learning environment for my future students will be one that is both high challenge and high support (Mariani, 1997), with instructional scaffolds in place that enable learners to work within their ZPD. Moving forward, I will continue to inquire into how to plan and implement rigorous, scaffolded instruction for a variety of proficiency levels to serve my future students most effectively and equitably.

My analysis of artifacts in the professional knowledge area *Curriculum* conveyed my commitment to implementing linguistically equitable instruction, namely through translanguaging (Lewis et al, 2012; Wei, 2011; de Jong, 2011; Garcia, 2009). While the artifacts do exhibit my dedication to these practices as outlined in my teaching philosophy, I think there is

a lot of room for personal improvement in their implementation. I realized that at its best, translanguaging enables students to draw on their full repertoire of linguistic knowledge and fully demonstrate their abilities. However, when poorly implemented, it can become a kind of "crutch" in which students' language progress can be stalled because they are not challenged to push themselves to use their second language. In this scenario, students are not operating in the aforementioned ZPD and effective, high-quality learning is likely not taking place.

Practices like translanguaging and code-switching are important for myriad reasons. They allow students to access all of their linguistic resources while also cultivating their metalinguistic awareness. Translanguaging explicitly conveys to learners that everyone has a right to their own language (de Jong, 2011). However, when implementing translingual practices, students' use of their first language should be deliberate and serve a specific purpose. For example, in my artifact analysis I discuss how if all members of a project group share the same first language, then they can be encourage to plan or draft their work in their native language if they choose to do so. Students can also be encouraged to make connections between their first language and English, through things like cognates or parallel grammar structures, among others. This in turn helps develop learners' metalinguistic awareness while also deepening their understandings of *both* languages (Wei, 2011). I still have many questions about how to most effectively and judiciously implement translanguaging in my future classroom; I will continue to expand my understanding of its theoretical underpinnings and practical applications through research and collaboration with experienced colleagues.

When considering the *Assessment* professional knowledge area, I feel that my analysis exemplified much of what I discussed in my teaching philosophy in terms of accessing students' funds of knowledge (Bazron et al., 2005; Moll et al., 1992). Prior to my study at Peabody, I

thought of "assessment" in very traditional means, as in standardized testing or multiple-choice items on a given grammar or vocabulary topic. However, my current conceptualization of what constitutes assessment has shifted dramatically from this perspective. In the artifact analysis, I described the process of engaging in an authentic and contextually appropriate assessment (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019) grounded in a learners' funds of knowledge. These are the kinds of assessments that I hope to engage in with my learners moving forward, often referred to as "alternative" assessments (Milner et al., 2018). These alternative assessments include cumulative learning portfolios, student journals, conferences, and cooperative group projects, among others. Moving forward, I will continue to modify my ideas about assessment and how they can be made more authentic for my learners' specific communicative contexts and goals. Ultimately, using a variety of culturally responsive assessment procedures is an important part of equitable, high-quality teaching and learning for ELL students (Gay, 2018).

It has been my experience that the more I learn, the more questions I have; this has certainly been the case throughout the process of creating this Capstone Portfolio. Every day, I have the incredible privilege of learning about new theories and cutting-edge pedagogical approaches from my professors and fellow classmates. Moving forward into my future teaching practice, I will always be looking to Peabody and its vast network of education professionals for guidance. I will also continuously seek out opportunities to collaborate with colleagues to create quality, innovative English language curricula and instructional approaches. Additionally, I will engage in meaningful, critical self-reflective practices at the end of each lesson, day, and unit, to see if I am truly embodying my teaching philosophy. Finally, I will always work to know my learners authentically as individuals and as cultural beings, building bridges between and among them and facilitating new pathways of collaborative knowledge construction.

References

Alexander, R. (2008). *Essays on pedagogy.* New York: Routledge.

Amstutz, L.S., & Mullet, J.H. (2005). *The little book of restorative discipline for schools: Teaching responsibility; creating caring climates*. New York: Good Books.

August, D., & Shanahan, T. (Eds.). (2006). *Developing literacy in second-language learners: A report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Bazron, B., Osher, D., & Fleischman, S. (2005). Creating culturally responsive schools. *Educational Leadership, 63*(1), 83-84.

Brown, D.H., & Abeywickrama, P. (2019). *Language assessment: Principles and classroom practices* (3rd ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Pearson Education.

Burbules, N. (1993). *Dialogue in teaching: Theory and practice.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Cammarota, J., & Romero, A. (2006). A critically compassionate intellectualism for Latina/o students: Raising voices about the silencing of our schools. *Multicultural Education, 14*(2), 16-23.

Canagarajah, S. (2006). After disinvention: possibilities for communication, community and competence. In S. Makoni & A. Pennycook (Eds.), *Disinventing and reconstituting languages* (pp. 233-239). Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.

Chandler, J. (2003). The efficacy of various kinds of error feedback for improvement in the accuracy and fluency of L2 student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 12, 3: 267-296.

Coady, M. [Maria Coady]. (2019, December 5). *Small Town Big Dreams* [Video]. YouTube.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qP4sbLce5sM&feature=youtu.be&ab_channel

Cutshall, S. (2012). More than a decade of standards: Integrating "communication" in your

    language instruction. *The Language Educator,* 7(2), 34-39.

Dawson, H., & Phelan, M. (2016). *Language files: Materials for an introduction to language*

    and linguistics, Twelfth Edition. The Ohio State University Press.

de Jong, E.J. (2011*). Foundations for multilingualism in education: From principles to*

    practice. Caslon: PA.

Delgado-Gaitan, C., & Trueba, H. (1991). *Crossing cultural borders: Education for immigrant*

    families in America. New York, NY: Falmer.

Echevarría, J., Vogt, M., & Short, D. (2013). *Making content comprehensible for English*

    learners: the SIOP model. (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Escamilla, K., & Hopewell, S. (2009). Transitions to biliteracy: Creating positive academic

    trajectories for emerging bilinguals in the United States. In J.E. Petrovic (Ed.),

    Instructional perspectives on bilingual education: Policy, practice, and controversy (pp.

    65-90). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Flippo, R.F., Hetzel, C., Gribouski, D., & Armstrong, L.A. (1997). Creating a student literacy

    corps in a diverse community. *Phi Delta Kappan, 78*(8), 644-646.

García, E.E. (2005). *Teaching and learning in two languages: Bilingualism and schooling in the*

    United States. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Gay, G. (2018). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice.* (Third Edition).

    New York: Teachers College Press.

Goldenberg, C. (2008). Teaching English language learners: What research does—and does not

    say. *American Educator, 32*(2), 8-23, 42-44.

González, N., Moll, L., & Amanti, C. (2005). *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities and classrooms.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Gottlieb, M. (2016). *Assessing English language learners: Bridges to educational equity: Connecting academic language proficiency to student achievement*. Corwin Press.

Haberman, M. (2010). The pedagogy of poverty versus good teaching. *Phi Delta Kappan, 92*(2), 81-87.

Halliday, M.A.K., & Hasan, R., (1985). *Language, context, and texts: Aspects of language in a social-semiotic perspective.* Geelong, Australia: Deakin University Press.

Hammond, J., & Gibbons, P. (2005) Putting scaffolding to work: The contribution of scaffolding in articulating ESL education. *Prospect, 20,* 6-30.

Harris, A.H. (2016). *Getting Off to a Good Start: The First Three Days of School.* (10th Edition). Department of Education.

Herrera, S.G., Murry, K.G., & Cabral, R.M. (2012). *Assessment Accommodations for Classroom Teachers of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students.* New York: Pearson Higher Ed.

Jimenez, R.T., Smith, P.H., & Teague, B.L. (2009). Transnational and community literacies for teachers. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *53*(1), 16-26.

Johnson, J., & Owen, L. (2013). Reaching a Culturally Diverse Immigrant Population of Adult English Language Learners. *Journal of Adult Education*, *42*(1), 23-29

Krashen, S.D. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition.* New York, NY: Pergamon Press.

Krashen, S.D. (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. New York: Longman.

Lewis, G., Jones, B., & Baker, C. (2012). Translanguaging: Developing its conceptualisation and

contextualisation. *Educational Research and Evaluation, 18*(7), 655-670.

Leung, C., & Lewkowicz, J. (2006). Expanding horizons and unresolved conundrums: Language

testing and assessment. *TESOL Quarterly, 40,* 211-234.

Long, M.H. (1996). The role of linguistic environment in second language acquisition. In W.C.

Ritchie & T. K. Bhatia (Eds.), *Handbook of second language acquisition* (pp. 413-468).

San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Mariani, L. (1997). Teacher support and teacher challenge in promoting learner autonomy.

Perspectives, 23(2).

Mercer, N. (1994). Neo-Vygotskian theory and classroom education. In B. Steirer & J. Maybin

(Eds.), *Language, literacy and learning in educational practice* (pp. 92-110). Clevedon:

Multilingual Matters.

Menyuk, P., & Brisk, M.E. (2005). *Language development and education.* New York: Palgrave

Macmillan.

Milner, H.R. (2010). *Start where you are but don't stay there: Understanding diversity,*

opportunity gaps, and teaching in today's classrooms. Cambridge, MA: Harvard

Education Press.

Milner, H.R. (2011). Five easy ways to connect with students. *Harvard Education Letter, 27*(1).

Milner, H.R., Cunningham, H.B., Delale-O'Connor, L., & Kestenberg, E.G. (2018). *These kids*

are out of control: Why we must reimagine classroom management for equity. Thousand

Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Moll, L.C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching:

Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into*

practice, *31*(2), 132-141.

Mousavi, S.A. (2009). *An encyclopedic dictionary of language testing* (4th ed.). Tehran, Iran:

> Rahnama Publications.

Nation, I.S.P. (2007). The four strands. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 1: 1-12.

Nation, I., & Macalister, J. (2010). *Language curriculum design.* New York: Routledge.

The National Standards Collaborative Board. (2015). *World-Readiness Standards for Learning*

> *Languages*. 4th ed. Alexandria, VA: Author.

Paul, R.W. (1986). Dialogical thinking: Critical thought essential to the acquisition of rational

> knowledge and passions. In J.B. Baron & R.J. Sternberg (Eds.), *Teaching thinking skills:*
>
> *Theory and practice* (pp. 127-148). New York: Freeman.

Reznitskaya, A. (2012). Dialogic teaching: Rethinking language use during literature

> discussions. *The reading teacher, 65*(7), 446-456.

Saifer, S., Edwards, K., Ellis, D., Ko, L., & Stuczynski, A. (2011). *Culturally responsive*

> *standards-based teaching: Classroom to community and back* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks,
>
> CA: Corwin.

Salazar, M. (2013). A humanizing pedagogy: Reinventing the principles and practice of

> education as a journey toward liberation. *Review of Research in Education*, *37*(1), 121-
>
> 148.

Sandrock, P. (2011). *The keys to assessing language performance: A teacher's manual for*

> *measuring student progress.* ACTFL.

Uccelli, P., & Phillips Galloway, E. (2017). Academic Language Across Content Areas: Lessons

> from an Innovative Assessment and from Students' Reflections About Language. *Journal*
>
> *of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 60*(4), 395-404.

Valenzuela, A. (1999). *Subtractive schooling: U.S.-Mexican youth and the politics of caring.*

Albany: NY: SUNY Press.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1968). *Thought and language (newly revised, translated, and edited by Alex Kozulin)*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes.* Edited by M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner & E. Souberman. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wei, L. (2011). Moment analysis and translanguaging space: Discursive construction of identities by multilingual Chinese youth in Britain. *Journal of Pragmatics, 43*, 1222-53.

Yule, G. (2017). *The study of language*, 6th edition. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Zapata, A., & Laman, T.T. (2016). "I write to show how beautiful my languages are": Translingual Writing Instruction in English-Dominant Classrooms. *Language Arts, 93*(5), 366-378.

Zehr, H. (2015). *Changing lenses: Restorative justice for our times* (25th anniv. Ed.). Harrisonburg, VA: Herald.

Appendix A: Community Literacies Investigation

"Which flavor is best?" I asked the young woman working at La Michoacana, a local (and delicious) Mexican-owned popsicle and ice cream shop on Nolensville Pike. Even with a mask covering most of her face, I could see her nervousness and confusion. So I tried again. *"Cúal es el mejor sabor?"* to which she immediately provided me with several mouth-watering options. How interesting it is, I thought, that we live in a country that has perpetuated this century-old narrative that speaking English is a condition for being a "good" or "real" American, that learning English and giving up cultural ties is a condition for achieving "success" (de Jong, 2011). However, as La Michoacana and many other immigrant-owned businesses on Nolensville Pike can attest to, this is not necessarily the case. On the contrary, these enterprising individuals have brought parts of their countries and cultures—of themselves—to Nashville, disproving the ever-present (although sometimes less explicit) English-only discourse that permeates much of life in this country. This is not to say that language does not serve as an obstacle, but rather that it is also, simultaneously, a gateway to the funds of knowledge present in the Latino immigrant community here in Nashville.

According to the 2000 Census, the 1990s saw a 446 percent growth in the Hispanic population in Nashville.[1] During this time, public agencies and nonprofit organizations faced considerable challenges in supporting this growing group. Conexión Américas was founded in 2002 with the mission of building a welcoming community and creating opportunities where Latino families can belong, contribute, and succeed.[2] Currently, the non-profit organization supports thousands of individuals with a comprehensive array of services including adult English classes, business start-up consultations, and college readiness programs, among many others.

[1] https://www.conexionamericas.org/who-we-are/our-history/
[2] https://www.conexionamericas.org/who-we-are/mission-and-approach/

Speaking with the Adult Education Coordinator at Conexión, Rachel Vailati, she sees the organization as a "beacon of hope" for many people—as a place where the Latinx community can be "greeted in a familiar way [in Spanish] which allows them to feel comfortable." She spoke to the incredibly vast network that the organization has establish in its almost twenty years on Nolensville Pike: "…when a referral is made people are reaching out to someone who they can speak to without needing a translator and someone who will walk them through the process." Rachel also sees Conexión as a place where many diverse groups of people come to learn and be empowered: "Whether it be the participants taking part in our programs or community members looking to gain more cultural competence to better position themselves without our community to be better welcomers. We work on both sides and strive to empower both from a perspective and with meaningful cultural competency."

Conexión is housed in Casa Azafrán, which is also home to a other local non-profit organizations including Catholic Charities and a health clinic. This space has become a "one-stop shop" of sorts where primarily immigrant Latinx families can come and be served by people who both speak their language and understand their diverse cultures. As Rachel discussed, the idea of "cultural competence" is critical when serving these communities—in striving to understand the individual and their culture in a variety of ways and developing an asset-based, learners mindset. All employees at Conexión are Spanish-English bilinguals, and in fact many of them were participants in the very programs that they now oversee. It is important to mention that while Conexión serves the "Latino immigrant community" in Nashville, that label is in reality incredibly diverse. In terms of the adult English classes, since March 2018 92.6% of students have been Spanish-speakers, and of that percent over half of them are from Mexico and Venezuela, with Honduras, El Salvador, and Colombia representing an additional third.

Just as "Latino" represents a wide array of cultural (and linguistic) variety, so does the term "immigrant." The individuals that Conexión serves may be refugees, asylees, undocumented, or may have chosen to come here with a visa. Rachel noted that when she first began her position in 2018, many of the students in the adult English classes were coming from Central America with a low level of interrupted education. Currently, demographics for the English classes have shifted with many students coming from Venezuela and Colombia with advanced and professional degrees from their countries. Many of these individuals held positions as engineers or teachers in their home country, but because "they just don't have English" are having to take considerable "steps down" in their professional lives. In this way, Rachel sees one of the biggest barriers for the communities Conexión serves as being language. Particularly for adults, navigating life and providing for a family in an unfamiliar language and culture presents a considerable challenge. These communities possess extensive stores of expertise and knowledge that are locked behind communicative doors due to the largely monolingual-English public sphere in this country.

Interestingly, one can live in the Nolensville Pike area without ever really having to use English, as the young woman who assisted me at La Michoacana proves. Because this is such a vibrantly multilingual and multicultural space, individuals are largely able to operate in their native languages—at home, at work, and in their day-to-day lives out in the community. Driving down any given stretch of Nolensville Pike, you see how individuals have been able to define "success" in their own terms, integrating their own knowledges and expertise into a variety of businesses. In other words, you will find funds of knowledge on every corner—whether it be an ice cream shop, a tire store, a restaurant, or an insurance office. Thus, we can begin to understand the expansive literacies and cultural resources present in the Nolensville Pike community.

I saw many connections between the lessons learned in visiting Nolensville Pike and talking with Rachel from Conexión to my future work as an English Learner (EL) teacher. She described how she strives to do everything in her power to make sure her students are successful, while being mindful of cultural competencies. I found this to be representative of many of the ideas present in Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP), and in particular of Culturally Responsive Caring (Gay, 2018). From Gay's work we see that students need to feel not just cared *about* but cared *for,* adding a degree of authenticity and informed empathy in which the teacher is aware of the culturally responsive ways in which students from diverse backgrounds can feel cared for. Being responsive in this sense means understanding the cultural influences on behaviors and the mental ecology of the classroom, as well as *using* this knowledge to guide action in the learning environment (Gay, 2018, p. 68). Using CRP, the classroom becomes a validating space in which the teacher is using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and frames of reference of students to increase the relevance and effectiveness of learning.

This brings us to the idea of identifying and amplifying funds of knowledge—the historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies if knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being (Moll et al, 1992). It is important for teachers to learn how culture and these funds of knowledge are expressed in students' lives, and to take deliberate care to not make assumptions, generalizations, or to stereotype. Instead, to access the myriad literacies and resources present in students' lives teachers should engage in community visits (as well as home visits, when possible) and in turn incorporate these into the curriculum and pedagogy of the classroom. Students can feel a sense of pride that their communities are being valued and respected, given that particularly for students from immigrant families, feelings of belonging, legitimacy, and membership often color learning experiences (Jimenez et al, 2009).

Both funds of knowledge and literacies are dynamic; they transform with the fluidity of culture and can vary both within and between cultural groups (Stewart, 2014). Incorporating these resources authentically in the classroom allows students to take on the role of peer teachers and challenges the traditional ideals and dynamics of these spaces. In a humanistic, people-centered classroom, all students and their experiences are valued. Differences across all facets of identity become opportunities to acquire a deeper and more profound understanding of the cultures, lives, experiences, and accomplishments of diverse peoples are the world. In this space linguistic and cultural differences are not barriers but rather pathways to new communal and collective understandings. When students and teachers alike can fully know, respect, and relate to one another both the community and the individual become strengthened.

Teaching and learning is inherently about people; it is our job, as educators, to help foster a welcoming and inclusive learning environment in which each student is given a chance to learn about themselves in relation to others. I am reminded of a quote by Paulo Coelho from the foreword to his book *The Alchemist* (2014): "When I read about clashes around the world...I am reminded that it is within our power to build a bridge to be crossed. Even if my neighbor doesn't understand my religion or understand my politics, he can understand my story." Thus, as EL teachers we place students and their stories at the center, building upon them to collaboratively construct shared knowledge from the vast array of funds of knowledge and community literacies each student brings into the classroom. We are both building bridges between and among students and creating new pathways of connection and knowledge-construction.

Visual Map

- La Michoacana popsicle and ice cream shop on Nolensville Pike (*Paletería y Nevería*):

- Bi/multilingualism at Conexión Americas, Caza Azafrán, and Azafrán Park

- Community literacies and funds of knowledge on Nolensville Pike:

References

Coelho, P., Clarke, A., & Smith, J. N. (2014). *The Alchemist*. (25th Anniversary Edition). New

    York: HarperCollins.

de Jong, E.J. (2011*). Foundations for multilingualism in education: From principles to practice*.

    Caslon: PA.

Gay, G. (2018). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice*. Teachers

    College Press.

Jimenez, R. T., Smith, P. H., & Teague, B. L. (2009). Transnational and community literacies for

    teachers. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *53*(1), 16-26.

Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching:

    Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into*

    practice, *31*(2), 132-141.

Stewart, M. A. M. (2014). Social networking, workplace, and entertainment literacies: The

    out-of-school literate lives of newcomer Latina/o adolescents. *Reading Research*

    Quarterly, *49*(4), 365-369.

Appendix B: Classroom Ecology Plan

Teaching Framework
Twelve Tenets for an Aspiring Adult English Language Learner Educator
The classroom is…
1. *Relationship-centered*
     o No significant learning in the classroom can happen without a significant relationship. This is why the classroom is focused on establishing deep, meaningful connections between *people* and not merely students. These relationship are cultivated through critical and consistent care. Engagement in learning in the classroom is increased when learners feel that their classroom is a place filled with others who truly care *about*, and not merely for, them. Demonstrating this care on a daily basis is a critical persistent practice that continually reinforces relationships as the foundations of the learning community.
2. *Humanistic*
     o The classroom community is composed of people from a diverse array of backgrounds. The classroom values all students, and uses differences across all facets of identity as an opportunity to acquire deeper and more profound understanding of the cultures, lives, experiences, and accomplishments of diverse peoples around the world. Interdependence is an inherent attribute of humanity, and when people can fully know, respect, and relate to one another both the individual and the community is strengthened.
3. *Collaborative*
     o The classroom is a community in which all members are contributing equitably to its construction. Dynamics of power and control are absent in this space, replaced by ubiquitous opportunities for learners to work together to cultivate the kind of community in which their learning is optimized. As Paulo Freire explains, "…we educate one another *in communion* in the context of living in this world."
4. *Empowering*
     o The classroom enables learners to be better human beings and more successful students. This empowerment leads to academic competence, personal confidence, courage, and the will to take action. The classroom is an environment that allows students to maximize their potential and work towards excellence personally and within their communities. It pushes students to excel and "grants" them permission to succeed and to reach their full capacity (Ladson-Billings, 2009).
The learners are…
5. *Independent and responsible*
     o Learners take on a certain degree of autonomy, as appropriate, in their learning processes. Learners can freely explore areas of their own interests in English or take on more challenging activities. Learners establish their own goals, criteria, and rewards for themselves so that their individual characteristics and abilities can be recognized and appreciated. They are given the agency to make decisions for themselves and take ownership of their learning.
6. *Engaged at all stages of the learning process*
     o Learning is not just a means to an end; the process by which new knowledge is acquired often outweighs any end product or result. Thus, lessons are both

challenging and directly relevant to learners' lives in order to facilitate high and sustained engagement in the material. The relevance and real-life application of material is made explicit to learners in such a way that critical connections are established.

7. *Critical thinkers and problem-solvers*
   o Learners are overtly committed to justice, which includes disrupting and ending discriminatory practices that have adversely affected their communities. Learners see themselves as active citizens and change agents who are capable of helping improve the ethos of their experience inside and outside of school and the experiences of others. They are able to connect what they are learning to finding solutions to real world problems.

8. *Respectful and compassionate*
   o Learners are able to demonstrate respect and compassion for both themselves and others in the learning community. Learning is a communal, reciprocal, and interdependent endeavor that is strengthened by the diversity of the classroom community. Learners support and encourage one another knowing that there is a communal responsibility to help one another achieve to the best of their abilities.

The teacher is…

9. *Empathetic*
   o The teacher cares not just for learners but also about them, allowing for the development of informed empathy (as opposed to mere sympathy). The teacher is constantly and consistently mindful of the impact their actions and statements have upon learners regardless of what their original intent may have been. They seek to know and understand learners as both people and students directly from the learners themselves, without making assumptions or generalizations.

10. *Validating*
    o The teacher uses the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of references, and performance styles of diverse students to increase the relevance and effectiveness of learning. The teacher affirms and acknowledges their learners, both as students and as people and works to merge outside of school realities with those inside the classroom and work with learner preferences and interests. In cultivating learning experiences, the teacher draws from the assets and strengths of the communities of learners.

11. *Equity-focused using individualized practices and approaches*
    o Rather than learners' receiving the exact same resources and tools, they receive what they need as individuals to be successful in a classroom environment. The teacher provides learners with what they need on the basis of careful and systematic attention to each person. This enables the teacher to assist learners in realizing and actualizing their potential, dreams, and goals in both school and life.

12. *Inclusive*
    o The teacher develops intellectual, social, and emotional learning by using culturally relevant resources to teach knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes—the teacher teaches the *whole* learner. Teachers teach to and through cultural diversity across the entire curriculum knowing that their learners are complex, multifaceted beings. The teacher is responsive to the unique needs, goals, and interests of each learner and finds ways to incorporate this knowledge in all aspects of classroom life.

Student Questionnaire: My Learning Habits[1]

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements by circling a number from 1 to 5. (1: Strongly disagree, 2: Somewhat disagree, 3: Neutral, 4: Somewhat agree, 5: Strongly agree)

I learn things quickly.
1   2   3   4   5

It is easy for me to focus during class time.
1   2   3   4   5

I like asking for help in class and with my assignments.
1   2   3   4   5

I like work that is challenging for me.
1   2   3   4   5

I enjoy working with others on tasks and projects.
1   2   3   4   5

I like working alone.
1   2   3   4   5

I like it when the teacher publicly acknowledges my success.
1   2   3   4   5

I believe that making mistakes is an important part of the learning process.
1   2   3   4   5

I like to practice my writing skills.
1   2   3   4   5

I like to practice my reading skills.
1   2   3   4   5

I like to practice my listening/speaking skills.
1   2   3   4   5

I believe I will do well in this class.
1   2   3   4   5

My favorite kinds of activities to do in the classroom are_____
_____

This year, I would most like to learn_____
_____

[1]Some of the items in this questionnaire were adapted from Alexander (2006).

Theoretical Support

Questionnaires can be extremely beneficial in establishing a student-centered classroom because it allows them to share more information on their existing needs, motivations, and goals, as well as learning habits and styles (Alexander, 2006, p. 208). One important aspect is that the information is coming directly from the students themselves, and can be used to inform teacher practice in many different ways. These questionnaires should be distributed during the first days of the course/semester/school year and students need to be provided ample time to complete them. The teacher should then take time to then review responses and analyze them for any particular patterns, similarities or differences among students that may emerge. Depending on this analysis, the teacher can begin to develop individualized approaches and equitable practices for students as needed. Alternatively, if questionnaires indicate that across the board students prefer certain strategies (i.e. working in groups instead of working alone), then this approach should be adopted and incorporated into daily classroom life as much as possible. By using this tool, the classroom can become an optimized space in which students' voices, knowledge, experiences, and other assets are centralized and amplified. (Milner et al., 2018, p. 99)

Student-Teacher Interview: Getting to Know You

- *Do you have a name you prefer to be called other than what is listed?*
- *Tell me about your family. What are they like?*
- *What language(s) do you speak at home?*
- *Do you have any hobbies or special talents?*
- *What do you like to do for fun or in your free time?*
- *What are you most looking forward to learning or doing in this course?*
- *What are your goals for this course?*
- *Where do you see yourself in 1 year? 5 years? 10 years?*
- *Is there anything else you would like me to know about you?*
- *Is there anything else you would like to know about me?*

Theoretical Support

Much like the questionnaire, one-on-one student-teacher interviews allow the teacher to learn more about students directly from them and help to lay the foundation for a deep, trusting student-teacher relationship. These should be done as close to the beginning of the course as possible, either before or after class or during office hours. It is important for the teacher to provide various time slots across different days so that each student is able to find the time to participate. While time and logistics are two notable challenges, both on the part of the students and the teacher, the positives and benefits that these interviews provide cannot be overstated. James Comer (1995) explains that no significant learning can occur without a significant relationship. Thus, these interviews provide the initial opportunity for students and the teacher to share more about their lives outside of the classroom and serve as the foundation upon which a strong relationship can begin to be built. Additionally, the information that students share during these interviews in terms of goals and interests can inform classroom content. It is very important that in inquiring about students' home language, culture, and family, the teacher explicitly expresses that all of these aspects of the students lives will be valued and amplified in the classroom. This way, it is clear to students that this class is not seeking to "replace" their native language with English nor "assimilate" them into U.S. culture (Salazar, 2013, p. 122)

Opening Activities: The First Five

- <u>Motivation Monday</u>: Each student shares their goals for the week, whether it be in the classroom or in their lives outside of class. For example, "I want to learn how to use phrasal verbs better" or "I want to confidently place an order at a restaurant on my own."
- <u>Teamwork Tuesday</u>: Students engage in a short team-building game/activity either as a whole class (depending on the number of students) or in smaller groups. For example, they can play something like Pictionary or Telephone, or can be given riddles to solve.
- <u>Word Wednesday</u>: Each week, one student is responsible for presenting a new word that they have discovered/heard being used in casual conversations/daily life (i.e. colloquialisms or idioms). The student will present the word and what it means, provide examples, and use some sort of visual aid to explain its meaning.
- <u>Throwback Thursday</u>: In pairs, students will share something from their past with a partner. Specific prompts will vary by the week, but can include things like a happy moment from their childhood, their proudest accomplishment, or what they wanted to be when they "grew up," among others. After sharing their reflections with their partner some students can share, as they feel comfortable, with the whole class.
- <u>Friend Friday</u>: Students will pair up and talk to someone in the class that they do not know or have not really talked to before. Students will then share one interesting or new fact that they learned about their partner with the rest of the class.

Theoretical Support

These "First Five" opening activities are brief (5 minute) opportunities to build community and rapport within the classroom. They serve as ice-breakers, make students feel more comfortable, and provide opportunities for everyone to participate equitably while setting the tone for the rest of the class period. Classes that start with this kind of routine and structure can also result in more instructional time, which correlates with increased academic achievement (Harris, 2016, p. 44). While the goal for all the activities is for students to be practicing their English in some way (mostly spoken), they provide different avenues for participation—whether as a whole class, in groups, in pairs, or in an individual/presenter role. This allows different kinds of learners and learning practices to be incorporated in a meaningful way. Additionally, students can feel validated and cared for in being able to share their diverse backgrounds and experiences with their teacher and fellow classmates (Johnson & Owen, 2013). The teacher should also be participating in these activities as much as possible and modeling how to engage in them.

Weekly Journal Reflections

At the beginning of each week, students are given a prompt to reflect upon and respond to in their journals by Friday. At the end of the day on Friday, there is a dedicated space and time (Circle Process) for student to share what they have written about, if they feel comfortable.

- Who is your role model?
- What is the most valuable piece of advice or wisdom you have received?
- What is your "why"?
- What makes you feel happy? Fulfilled? Scared?
- What is your favorite place in the world and why?
- What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses?
- What are you most grateful for in your life?
- What is the most beautiful thing or place you have ever seen or experienced?
- What are some of the most important issues you see in your community? How would you address them?
- What are some of the most pressing issues you see in your country? What are some possible solutions?
- What are 5-10 core values that you strive to live by? Why do you think they are important? Where do these values come from?
- Who is someone whose life you have positively impacted? How did you know you made a difference in their lives?

Theoretical Support

Giving students an assignment that allows them to share their experiences and interests is an important part of cultivating relationships (Milner, 2011). The ultimate purpose of this assignment is for students to be sharing parts of themselves (and their backgrounds) in authentic ways. From day one, the teacher needs to explicitly state that the classroom is a brave and respectful space in which students are always welcome and encouraged to share, and that discomfort can lead to meaningful growth, both as a student and as an individual (Stengel, 2010). Because most students in an English Language Learner classroom are coming from diverse backgrounds, responses to these prompts are likely to vary greatly given that many of the prompts reflect things like culturally-informed norms, practices, and values. The teacher should also serve as a model in the classroom, engaging in the prompts and sharing their responses in order to encourage brave participation in this activity.

Co-Creating Classroom Norms

The process of co-creating classroom norms, adapted from Milner (2018, p. 102):

1. This is done the first week of the course, ideally the first day time permitting
2. The teacher explains that this is *everyone's* classroom and that and all voices are valued
3. Students conduct a class-wide brainstorming session, listing the norms they feel are most important for cultivating a *caring* classroom community
4. The norms are framed in positive, proactive ways (asset-based)
5. Students write the list of proposed norms on the board for everyone to see
6. Everyone examines the proposed norms and decides if anything else needs to be added or taken away (the teacher can offer suggestions as well)
7. The final list of norms is completed
8. We hold a vote to adopt them as our classroom norms for everyone
9. Both the students and teacher write the norms in their notebooks so they can be easily accessed and referred back to
10. After writing them out, students and the teacher sign their list agreeing to honor these norms

General suggested norms (linked to Teaching Framework):
- Brave and active participation and engagement at all stages of the learning process
- Respect for ourselves and others as members of the classroom community and individuals
- Collaboration and compassion within our learning communities
- Independence and responsibility in our words and actions
- Critical thinking and problem-solving
- Equity and inclusivity towards all classroom community members

Theoretical Support

One of the first things that can be done to cultivate a student-centered classroom is co-constructing classroom norms and expectations. Consequently, each course/school year should begin with students and teachers developing norms together. This way, all voices are heard and everyone has a role in creating a caring classroom environment. Students tend to be more engaged and take greater ownership of their learning and behavior when given the opportunity to contribute to the creation of these classroom norms (Cushman, 2003). In addition, a process such as the one described above ensures that all students feel heard, respected, and valued. Co-constructing these norms and expectations also enables teachers to learn more about their students, hear what their needs are directly from them, and be responsive at a critical moment.

Home & Community Visits

- Initial proposal of home/community visit:

Hello (student), I would like to get to know a bit more about your neighborhood/community and I am planning on visiting on (date). What are some notable or important places that you think I should visit? What are the most important institutions? (i.e. gathering places, community centers, attractions, restaurants, shops). If you are available, would you mind if I stopped by to visit you at your home?

- IF student respond positively to offer to visit home and is available:

Wonderful! Is there something I can bring? Who will I be meeting? I am excited to learn more about your family and your community!

- IF student declines offer:

No worries! I am excited to get to learn a little bit more about your community from the suggestions you provided me with.

- Following home/community visit:

(Student), thank you so much for opening up your home/community to me! I loved getting to learn _____ and _____. I would love to incorporate _____into our classroom curricula/practices based on what we talked about during the visit. Or perhaps your (family/community member) could visit our class and talk/teach us about _____!

Theoretical Support

Visiting sites in a students' community is another practice than can help cultivate and strengthen the student-teacher relationship. When teachers immerse themselves in a students' community and home, they can get a first-hand look at their lives outside of the classroom environment (Milner, 2011). The more comprehensive the teachers' understanding is of their students, the more they can incorporate their students interests in the classroom as well as draw connections between class curriculum and real life. Understanding students' home experiences is also an important part of demonstrating care and developing a humanizing pedagogy (Salazar, 2013). Additionally, by getting to know communities and families better, teachers can invite them into the classroom to teach or facilitate lessons in culturally responsive ways using their own knowledge, skills, and experiences. It is important to be mindful here, however, of equity and never favoring one student or group of students over others.

Addressing Behavioral Concerns in the Classroom

The following working document will be distributed to all students and discussed during the first week of class with space for students to add their input and make adjustments as needed. This discussion will take place after the Classroom Norms have been co-constructed on Day 1, which will describe what behaviors are expected of students.

- <u>If we are beginning to feel a negative emotion</u> during class time, such as frustration, anger, or discouragement, and we believe we may disrupt the classroom with these negative emotions, we will use this non-verbal gesture of _____ [i.e. thumbs-down] to indicate to the teacher that we need to take a quick break. The teacher will acknowledge this gesture, and we will have 5 minutes to leave the classroom and to do what we need to do to feel better, such as taking deep breaths, using the bathroom, or drinking water.
    - If the teacher notices that we are displaying any of these negative emotions and we do not gesture to her, she may come over to us and quietly ask if we are feeling alright and what she can do to support us. We can decide together if a break is needed or if we are able to continue our work without disrupting our classmates' learning.
- <u>First Behavioral Concern</u>: We and the teacher will hold a brief one-on-one check-in following the class in which the concerning behavior was demonstrated that violated a classroom norm. We will be given this space to discuss why we acted in a particular way, and we and the teacher together will develop an individualized plan to prevent the concerning behavior from happening again. This plan will include the specific steps both we (the students) and the teacher need to take to respond appropriately so the behavior does not continue. We can arrange regular check-ins to continually monitor our progress.
- <u>Second Behavioral Concern</u>: We and the teacher will schedule a conference for a minimum of 30 minutes outside of class time. We will be given the space to express how we were feeling and why this behavior occurred. We will revisit the previously established plan and see what modifications are necessary. We and the teacher will both write out what each of us needs to do to prevent the behavior and sign it. We, the students, will then write a reflection in our journals on the event/concerning behavior and answer the following questions: *What was really happening during this event? What role did I play? Am I studying and exerting the necessary energy in my classroom assignments?* (Milner, 2018. p. 67)
- <u>Third Behavioral Concern</u>: We, the teacher, and an administrator will schedule a conference. Both we and the teacher will have the space to express our interpretation of the event and why we think it occurred. The administrator will act as a mediator, and will ask us (the student) to answer the following questions: *What happened? What were you thinking at the time? What have you thought about since? Who has been affected by what you have done? In what ways have they been affected? What do you think you need to do to make things right?* (Costello et al., 2009). Based on our responses to these questions, the administrator will offer suggestions as to how to prevent the concerning behavior from reoccurring and create an agreement that we and the teacher sign, with the understanding that another concerning behavior/norm violation may lead to our removal from the course, either temporarily or permanently, depending upon the severity of the behavior. We will also write a journal reflection, answering the questions above as well as: *What did I think when I realized what had happened? What impact has this event had on me and others? What has been the hardest thing for me? What do I think needs to happen to make things right?* (Costello et al, 2009).

Theoretical Support

Given that this is a classroom of adult learners, it is important that students have considerable autonomy in this process, as well as multiple opportunities to remedy any norm violations (as established by students and the teacher together) that may be occurring. When teachers are attuned to their students and actively notice and inquire into why they may be disengaged or frustrated, teachers can best address their student's needs (Milner, 2018, p. 116). Teachers can work with students to create a signal for them to nonverbally communicate that they need the teachers' support before violating classroom norms. This is a proactive way to avoid potential behavioral concerns. Students should also be provided with every opportunity to remain in the learning community, because when students are sent out of the classroom it damages their relationship with both the teacher and the greater classroom community (Milner, 2018, p. 118). In addition to this diminished sense of belonging, students who miss classroom learning time also tend to fall behind academically (Gottfried, 2010).

Due to the far-reaching and detrimental impacts of exclusionary discipline policies as a result of "zero tolerance" approaches, students should be given every opportunity to remain in the classroom (Brown, 2007). Thus, with this 3-tiered policy students have multiple opportunities to remedy behavior violations before potentially leaving the classroom. This behavior management policy incorporates aspects of different approaches including critical reflective practices through journaling and restorative justice practices through conferences. It is important that students feel cared *for* when they are facing challenging emotions and that they feel that the teacher has their best interests at heart. The goal here is to address the underlying factors that may be leading to these behavioral concerns, and not to "punish" students for "noncompliance." This is why there is a three-tiered system allowing students multiple opportunities to reflect critically and make positive changes to their behaviors and actions.

Technology Policy

The following policy on the use of technology in the classroom will also be presented during the first week of class, after classroom norms have been co-created on Day 1. This policy will be examined collaboratively and all students are welcomed to share their thoughts.

- In order for all of us to learn effectively in the classroom, we must ensure that we are as focused as possible on the task at hand. In order to accomplish this, <u>we all will put our cellphones on silent and put them away and out of sight for the duration of our class</u>.
- If an activity involves the use of cellphones (for example for research or other collaborative purposes), the teacher will say "We can now take out our cellphones for this activity." We will all use our phones responsibly, and do our best to stay focused on the task at hand while using our cellphones to complete it. When the task is done, we will put our cellphones away.
- If you are expecting an important phone call or anticipating that you will need to use your cellphone, please let the teacher know prior to the beginning of class. When you are receiving the call, simply signal to the teacher and you may take a few moments to step out of the classroom and receive the call without disrupting the learning environment.
- Technology can be an important asset to our classroom learning environment however we all agree to use to it responsibly and only when the teacher has stated that it is an appropriate time to use it. If we are unable to use this technology in a productive way, the teacher will ask the student(s) to stay after class to discuss what occurred and why this policy was not being respected as we have established.

Theoretical Support

Trust is an important part of the student-teacher relationship, and in granting students autonomy with the use of personal technology to complete certain assignments the teacher is communicating their trust in students to use it responsibly (Duncan-Andrade, 2007). While it is not conducive to learning nor community-building to constantly be using personal technologies, the classroom does need to be reflective of modern realities. The use of things like cellphone as learning tools to conduct research or investigate certain themes can enhance the learning experience when used for a specific purpose as directed by the teacher. Because this is a class of adult students, the teacher can trust that students will be able to use these personal technologies in a responsible way that contributes to a positive classroom experience. It is important that the teacher also adhere to this policy and models the behaviors they expect in their students by not using their cellphones immediately before or during class time.

Plagiarism Policy: Academic Honesty

The classroom policy on plagiarism will also be addressed in the first week of classes. After reviewing the policy, the class will engage in a discussion and reflection upon why this policy is in place and how acts of academic dishonesty can adversely impact their learning and the classroom community as a whole.

Academic honesty is critical in our classroom. If we are using the words or ideas of another individual we must give them the appropriate credit through a citation/reference. If we fail to do this, the work will be considered plagiarism. If we are plagiarizing our work, then we are likely not engaging in an academic activity that we will learn from. Following is a description of what will happen if a member of our learning community is found to be plagiarizing or cheating on an assignment, which are examples of academically dishonest behaviors:

- First instance of academic dishonesty: The student(s) will have a conference with the teacher to discuss the assignment in question. Students will be given the opportunity to discuss what happened from their point of view. The teacher will refer back to this policy, and the student(s) will sign an Academic Honesty Agreement. The student(s) will have the opportunity to re-do the assignment in an academically honest way. The student(s) will also write a reflection in their journal responding to the following questions: *What impact has this incident had on me and others? In what ways does academic dishonestly impede my growth as a learner?*
- Second instance of academic dishonesty: The student(s) will have a conference with the teacher and an administrator. All parties will have the opportunity to speak, with an emphasis on the *actions* and their implications, not on the person. The Academic Honesty Agreement will be revised and all parties present will sign it. The students(s) will be given the opportunity to complete the assignment for partial credit as well as write a reflection in their journal using the aforementioned questions. The teacher and student(s) will schedule regular check-in meetings to discuss the student(s) progress on assignments and class content and the ways in which the teacher can best support them.
- Third instance of academic dishonesty: The student(s) will have a conference with the teacher and school administrators. Together they will develop a learning plan with weekly goals to be met, and will reflect upon the underlying reasons as to why academic dishonesty continues to be a concern for the student(s). The teacher will meet with the student(s) regularly to reflect on the progress being made in the weekly goals, such as breaking down assignments into smaller, more manageable parts. The student(s) will also write a reflection in their journal on the event. The student will not be able to make up the assignment in question. The student will sign a new Academic Honesty Agreement stating that any additional infraction may result in temporary removal (suspension) from the classroom for a certain amount of time as decided upon by the school administrators.

Theoretical Support

Teachers must seek to understand their students' behavior and meet their needs before engaging in punitive measures as much as possible. Teachers should also do their best to treat every day as a new day (Milner, 2018, p. 118). If a student engages in academic dishonesty, it is important to wipe the slate clean and communicate to them that their past behaviors will not impact how they will be treated as a member of the classroom community. This helps maintain a sense of belonging in the classroom for the student as well as a level of psychological safety when they realize that they have the opportunity to start anew each day (Wanless, 2016). This system is in place so that students are given multiple chances to correct any instances of plagiarism and cheating while also allowing them to both grow and learn from the experience.

Conferences, one of the three main restorative discipline practices, are not meant as punitive measures but rather to provide students with the space to critically reflect upon their behaviors and examine the adverse impacts of academic dishonesty (Amstutz & Mullet, 2005). Students are held accountable but it is important that the focus of the conferences are on the actions that were committed, and not seen as a reflection of who the student is as a person. Acts of academic dishonesty may be evidence of deeper concerns, such as challenges with course content. More regular check-in meetings with the students and the establishment of smaller goals may help better support this student so that they do not feel they need to turn to plagiarism and/or cheating to complete their assignments. If a student is found cheating off of another student, both students may be present at the conferences if they willingly agree to participate. The student who engaged in academically dishonest behaviors can have the opportunity to acknowledge the harm they have done, decide what needs to be done to make things right again, and agree how to avoid a similar situation moving forward (Amstutz & Mullet, 2005).

Seating Arrangements

The default seating arrangement for the classroom will be either a U or 3-sided shape of desks oriented towards the front of the room. Students are allowed to select their own seats, however students will be encouraged to sit in a different seat each day so they can get to know all of their classmates better. If students are engaging in disruptive behaviors with their neighbor they may be asked to switch seats for the next time the class meets.
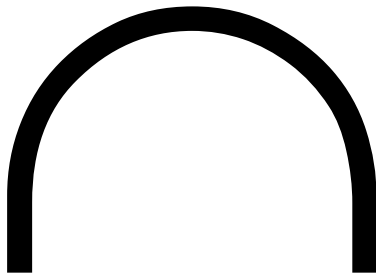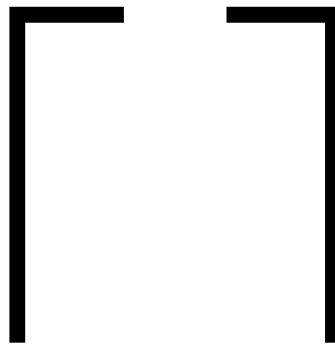
[Board]   [Board]

On designated "work days" the classroom will be designed to make space for personalized learning. Those who want to engage in individual work will sit at the back and sides of the classroom facing the wall, so that the teacher is able to see clearly what the student is working on. Those who want to work collaboratively will sit in group clusters in the middle of the classroom. Finally, the students who want a mini-lesson from the teacher will be sitting in a semi-circle in the front and center of the classroom in front of the board. Students are allowed to choose if they want to work individually, collaboratively with their classmates, or with the teacher in the mini-lesson. It would be helpful to have furniture in the classroom that is mobile/on wheels to best accommodate for work day setups.
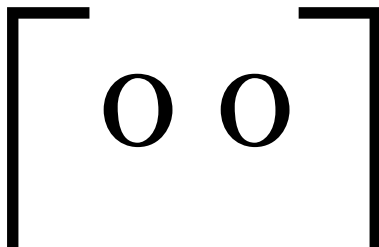
( ) ( ) ( )
[Mini-Lesson Space]

Theoretical Support

The seating arrangement in the classroom influences how comfortable students feel and the amount of interaction between other students and with the teacher. Both task demands and learning goals are relevant when considering the optimal seating arrangement for the classroom (Cheryan et al., 2014, p. 7). The physical organization of the classroom should promote the kinds of interactions that the teacher wants their students to have, and teachers can arrange classroom environments in ways that promote cooperation, respect, and build helpful peer relationships (Lemov, 2014; Tomlinson, 2014). One of the benefits of a U or 3-sided shape is that everyone is able to see each other. Because a lot of the class is centered upon class discussions, it is very important that the seating arrangement help facilitate openness and universal visibility. This shape also decreases the ability of students to "hide" in the back of the room and encourages participation from all members of the classroom community (Boynton & Boynton, 2005)

The flexible design of the classroom for "work days" is also very important because it allows students to personalize their learning and adopt the strategy that will work best for them and their particular learning goals that day. For this to be effective, however, teachers must understand the needs of their students, which can be accomplished through surveys given out at the beginning of the year/semester/course. This way, the teacher can better plan which students will want to work independently, which students will choose to learn collaboratively, and which students will want more support from the teacher. With this flexible seating arrangement, it is important for students to write their goals for the day on the board so that there is some accountability and the teacher has an idea of what specifically each student it working on. By providing students with personalized options, students are also granted more autonomy in the classroom and will likely take greater ownership of their learning.

Our Essential Questions

The following are the essential questions that will frame both what content is taught and how learning is accomplished in our student-centered classroom, adapted from Haberman (2010).

- Are we involved with issues we consider to be vital concerns in our lives?
- Are we involved with explanations of human differences such as race, gender, and religion?
- Are we being helped to see major concepts, big ideas, and general themes?
- Are we involved in planning what we will be doing in class?
- Are we involved with the application of ideals such as fairness, equity, and social justice for marginalized groups?
- Are we actively engaged in learning tasks in heterogeneous groups?
- Are we encouraged to question and critically examine content?
- Are we reflecting on our own lives, and how we have come to believe and feel as we do?

Theoretical Support

In seeking to cultivate a student-centered classroom it is important that the essential questions frame content in a way that makes it relevant to the students and their diverse array of lived experiences. All content should be taught through a critical lens that addresses issues such as who is being included/represented in this material and who is absent? Both teachers and students act as critical beings working together to co-construct knowledge, and students can realize they are knowledgeable and have agency over their own educational processes (Cammarota & Romero, 2006). Additionally, these essential questions create a dialogue for critical consciousness grounded in students' lived experiences that reflect social and political conditions that reproduce inequity and oppression (Souto-Manning, 2006). Overall, promoting high student engagement in the classroom means selecting and presenting content in a way that attends to the learning experiences of the particular group of students in the classroom and reflects political and societal realities. The learning experienced should be tailored and personalized to students' unique needs and goals, as much as possible, and these essential questions enable the teacher to accomplish just that.

Professional Learning Communities

For the purposes of collaboration, when we are engaged in group activities we will break out into our Professional Learning Communities. These will be established within the first few weeks of school and will be used throughout the course whenever we are engaging in group work. The teacher will determine the PLCs taking into consideration student first day questionnaires, individual student-teacher interviews, as well as student backgrounds and experiences. In particular in an English Language Learner classroom, there can be a tendency for students from the same linguistic background to group together. The PLCs will be very deliberately designed so as to consist of members from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. If there is a large spectrum of English-speaking abilities in the classroom, the groups will not be formed based upon English fluency but rather a variety of levels will be present in each group. The size of the PLC group should not exceed 5 members. On a weekly basis, there will be learning tasks designed specifically to be completed by the PLC, and periodically the PLCs will be responsible for presenting or teaching a lesson to the rest of their classmates.

Theoretical Support

Community-building is an essential practice towards developing a caring classroom.

Effective teaching is also closely linked to the development of deep and caring relationships

(Duncan-Andrade, 2009). These are not just the student-teacher relationship, but also the

relationships that students are able to build with each other. This is of particular importance in an

English Language Learner classroom, where it is highly likely that students are coming from a

diverse array of linguistic, cultural, racial, and religious backgrounds. Smaller groupings within

the classroom, or Professional Learning Communities, provide opportunities for students to build

bonds and connections with fellow classmates and hopefully come to better understand each

other and where they are coming from. Thus, as much as possible the PLCs should represent a

heterogenous mix of the students that are present in the greater classroom community. Building

relationships first with their PLCs may also help students ultimately become more comfortable

and feel more welcomed in the learning environment. The teacher should take some time to

intentionally think about these groupings, using what knowledge they have about their students

backgrounds, abilities, and strengths. If students express to the teacher that they wish to switch

PLCs, the teacher should carefully consider the implications on the whole learning environment.

Introducing Myself: Biopoem[1]

Hello, students, and welcome to our English class. My name is Ms. Davis and I am so happy to be here learning and growing with you all this year. I am so excited for our class and to get to know all of you and hear some of your stories. I absolutely love languages, learning, and teaching, and I hope that in this classroom we will do a bit of all three of these things—and more! I know this year is going to have some challenges but through any mistakes we make we will continue to learn and grow. To start things off I would like us to get to know each other better. I will start by sharing some things about myself using something called a "biopoem." A biopoem is a way for us to share who we are, some things we like, and some things we maybe do not like as much. I will read my biopoem to you all and then you will each make your own. When you finish, you will share what you wrote with a partner. Here is my biopoem:

Catherine
 Sister, student, friend
 Delighted by time with loved ones
 Annoyed by disrespect (in all its forms)
 Caring, loyal, organized
Davis

What did you all learn about me from hearing my biopoem? Now I will explain how you can make your own.

[Write outline on board/pull up digital copy if smartboard available]

First name(s)
 3 nouns that you are
 One or more things that you like (Delighted by….)
 One or more things that you do not like (Annoyed by…)
 3 adjectives that describe you
Last name(s)

Does everyone know what a noun is? An adjective? Does anyone have any more questions? Here is a piece of paper for you to write your poem on. I am here to help while you work on these! When you finish writing your biopoem, find a partner and share it with them.

[Students write, form partners, share with partners, teacher weaves between pairs as they are sharing, then everyone comes back together as class]

Would anybody like to share their biopoem? [A few students share] *Thank you [student], [student], and [student] for sharing with the class! I love learning more about you and I appreciate your courage in sharing. Can anybody else tell me something interesting they learned about their partner through hearing their biopoem? What else would we like to know about each other that we did not learn with the biopoem? What did you think of this activity? Would you all like to do more activities like this in the future? If not, what kinds of activities would you prefer?*

[1]Adapted from BIOPOEM: Introducing Myself (Harris, 2016, p. 131)

Theoretical Support

One of the first tasks for a teacher in beginning a new school year is to lessen students' anxieties (Harris, 2016). One of students' greatest concerns on the first day of school is whether or not the teacher will say their names correctly (Wong, 1991). The biopoem is an effective activity because it can address both of these concerns—getting to know more about their teacher and fellow classmates can help ease some of their worries (and begins building community), and by having them share their biopoems they are the first ones to say their own names. This way, the teacher can take note of how to properly say their names so that any fears about it being mispronounced and about this being a possible source of amusement for others can be alleviated. Given that this is an ELL classroom, it is likely that many student names could be potentially challenging for the teacher or other classmates, so this way mispronunciation can be avoided and hopefully some concerns can be alleviated.

The biopoem also serves as a more creative and engaging way for the whole classroom to share a bit about themselves. Beginning with the teacher modeling how to do it, students begin to understand who the teacher is and what they are like as a person, and not just as their teacher. Ideally, the teacher will be able to convey to the students that they are a human being who can be trusted and will learn and grow with them (the students) in ways that are both fair and safe (Harris, 2016). Then, by having everyone participate in the activity, it shows that the classroom is a place of collaboration between all members, where every voice has a place and will be heard and amplified. Students can begin to build community when they share their works with their partner, and then with the class as a whole. This activity can also help contribute to a sense of safety in the classroom as students and the teacher get to know each other better and start developing bonds of trust and care.

Keep In Touch: Help Me Get to Know You[1]

The following handout will be distributed to students at the end of the first day. The teacher will explain how to fill it out and that it is to be completed at home and turned in to the teacher at the end of the first week of class.

Please take a few minutes to answer the questions below and return this form to me in class on Friday. As we begin this school year, your responses to these questions help me understand how to be the most effective teacher for you. Thank you for helping me get to know you more!

Name:_____ Phone Number: _____

Email address:_____ Preferred method of contact:_____

What is the best time of day to contact you?_____

Would you like to be included in a class GroupMe/WhatsApp group? (Circle one)   YES   NO

1. I have some special interests and/or talents I want you to know about. They are:

2. The area that I need some extra help/practice in with English is:

3. Because of my interests, I think our class would be more interesting to me if:

4. Something I think you, the teacher, might like to know about me is that:

5. If you or someone in your house or family would like to volunteer your time and talents to share any skills, knowledge, or experiences with our class, please let me know here:

[1]Adaped from Harris (2016, p. 87)

Theoretical Support

The "Help Me Get to Know You" handout is a useful tool for several reasons, and differs from the other "get to know you" activities mentioned previously in both form and function. To begin, this is something that students will fill out independently and outside of the classroom (the first "homework" assignment). One of the most important aspects is at the top of the form where students will fill out their contact information. This is critical because the teacher needs to know how to best get into contact with students, and hopefully they will opt-in to participating in a group messaging forum (GroupMe or WhatsApp). These groups are important because they serve as a simple and efficient way to get pertinent information regarding class assignments, approaching due dates, or relevant events (among other things) to all students. This can also be a forum where students can ask questions to the teacher or their classmates and share any pertinent information with the classroom community even when they are not physically in class.

An additional purpose of this handout is for the student to reflect upon their special interests, talents, and needs, and share them with the teacher in a confidential way. The teacher can then tap into these areas in meaningful ways across classroom life, thus helping students become more engaged and learning optimized (Hidi, 1990). The teacher can use the information students provide on these forms to continuously evaluate how lessons and topics are matching students' needs and interests. The final question also serves as a way to incorporate students' family members and tap into the *community cultural wealth* they possess (Yosso, 2005). This not only allows students' to share their cultures with the classroom but also serves to highlight the vast array of knowledge, skills, abilities, and contacts that students and their communities possess. Given that the student cannot be separated from their various identities, it is important that students feel that their cultures, languages, and backgrounds are being valued and honored in the classroom.

Funds of Knowledge: BINGO!

The teacher will explain that they will be doing an activity that will help them all get to know each other better called "BINGO!" Everyone must get up out of their seats and find a classmate who fits each of the statements. Once they find someone, that person will sign their name in the space provided at the top of each square. Once a student has five statements in a row vertically, horizontally, or diagonally they will shout BINGO! and have completed the game. Students are encouraged, however, to see if they can get signatures in all 25 squares (everyone wins because they are learning more about each other). Any one student cannot sign for more than 2 statements, and students can only sign their own sheet in the "FREE" center square. The teacher will also be playing. Each student is given one BINGO! sheet and instructed to take out a writing utensil. *We have 5 minutes…get out of your seat and GO!*

GETTING TO KNOW MY CLASSMATES: **BINGO!**

_____ speaks 3 or more languages	_____ has 4 or more siblings	_____ is left-handed	_____ likes spicy food	_____ is a good dancer
_____ has visited 10 or more countries	_____ is an athlete	_____ plays an instrument	_____ prefers hot weather over cold	_____ loves going to the beach
_____ likes to write poems, books, or stories	_____ is a good cook	_____ *is MY signature (FREE)*	_____ reads the newspaper every day	_____ has been skydiving
_____ enjoys spending time with their family	_____ loves the snow and cold weather	_____ likes to draw or paint	_____ has good handwriting	_____ knows how to fish or hunt
_____ likes watching sports	_____ has lived on an island	_____ has 2 or more children	_____ keeps up with the latest fashion trends	_____ likes to sing for others

Once the ~5 minutes have passed, the teacher will prompt the second part of the activity: *Now, we are going to look over our BINGO! sheets and go back to our classmates who signed them. Ask them more questions related to the statements they signed for, for example if they "like to sing for others" what kind of songs/music do they sing? Have they ever performed in a concert?*

After another ~5 minutes, the teacher will reflect/debrief: *Who can share an interesting detail they learned about their classmates? Was anything surprising? Do we all have a lot of experiences/talents/likes in common, or does everyone have very different ones?*

Theoretical Support

There are several key elements that make this "BINGO!" activity effective for an adult English Language Learner classroom. First, the structure of this activity is an efficient way to get classmates talking and interacting with everyone in the learning community given that a single person can sign no more than 2 squares (this can be adjusted depending upon the number of students in the class). Second, for students who are more shy or reserved this is a relatively relaxed and non-intimidating way to incorporate talking in pairs while also involving everyone (including the teacher). Finally, in terms of the structure of the activity the second part is important because it is taking some somewhat basic "get to know you" questions and following-up by having students share more details and information about themselves.

Another critical aspect of this activity is what the statements in each square represent. Once again, although seemingly simple, they have been deliberately designed to represent the myriad funds of knowledge students are likely bringing into the classroom. The activity ends with the teacher posing to the class whether everyone had many experiences/talents/interests and common, and regardless of whether it is yes or no this activity seeks to reveal both the incredible depth and breadth of community cultural wealth present in the classroom (Yosso, 2005). Consequently, the teacher can weave this diverse array of linguistic, cultural, and familial resources throughout the course so that students do not feel they have to divest themselves of these things to succeed in this ELL classroom (Salazar, 2013). One of the core values of this classroom, as reflected in the Teaching Framework, is that it is *humanizing*. Student differences across all facets of identity provide an opportunity to acquire a deeper understanding of the cultures, lives, experiences, and accomplishments of diverse peoples around the world. Interdependence is an inherent attribute of humanity, and when students can fully know, respect, and relate to one another both the individual and the community is strengthened.

News Worthy: Restorative Circle Processes

Each week of the course ends with a Circle Process. This dedicated time and space will be used to share student responses to their Weekly Journal Reflections, however this activity will also be used to discuss and reflect upon current local, national, or global events that they or their communities have been impacted by (if the prompt is not already specifically addressing these things). The following are the steps to be used in implementing circle processes in a classroom setting as adapted from Amstutz and Mullet (2005):

- All members of the classroom community sit in a physical circle and a facilitator leads the meeting. Either the teacher or a student may serve as the facilitator, and this will be decided prior to the beginning of the activity.
- The facilitator makes and introduction and reminds the community of the values embodied in the Circle Process. These values typically center around the idea that everyone in the circle is connected by core values, but that each person has a right to their own individual beliefs. The students and teacher can also co-construct other values that the circle will highlight, such as honesty and compassion.
- To begin, the facilitator poses the Weekly Journal Reflection prompt to the group, and/or a pertinent current event topic, and then passes the talking piece (i.e. a ball) around the circle to each member. Circle participants can only talk when holding the talking piece, and only one person will speak at a time. Students can choose to pass the talking piece if they do not want to share but they are highly encouraged to participate.
- Everyone, including the facilitator, will be passed the talking piece at least once (if not multiple times, depending upon the prompt/current event).
- The facilitator both opens and closes the Circle Process, and students are provided with an opportunity to reflect upon the circle either in pairs or independently in writing.

Weekly Journal Reflection prompts that directly connect to current news events:
- What are some of the most important issues you see in your community? How would you address them? What are the underlying causes and how do they impact you and your community?
- What are some of the most pressing issues you see in your country? What are some possible solutions? What are the underlying causes and how do they impact your life?
- What are some of the most pressing issues you see in the world? What are some possible ways to address these issues? What are the underlying causes?

Three events from the last six months to be discussed in the Circle Processes:
1. COVID-19 and its disproportional impact on communities of color (causes, examine the underlying beliefs/racism)
2. The Black Lives Matter movement/protests, taking down of racist statues, re-naming institutions, eliminating racist symbols in consumer culture (why is this just happening now?)
3. The decision many working-class families have to face in sending their children back to school in-person (questions of equity, accessibility, safety)

Theoretical Support

Circle Processes can be incredibly effective not merely as a restorative discipline practice when a community norm has been violated, but also proactively as a regular educational routine (Zehr, 2015). This process focuses on promoting strong relationships and a sense of community among all members of the classroom (Milner, 2018, p. 145). In terms of the physical arrangement of the activity, sitting in a circle shape allows students and the teacher to openly interact with one another on more equal footing. The mere act of sitting in a circle promotes a greater sense of equality, community, connection, and inclusion among students (Costello, Wachtel, & Wachtel, 2010).

Using Circle Processes regularly in the classroom can promote intragroup relationships and develop a common understanding of ideas, values, and expectations among members of the classroom community (Milner, 2018, p. 147). Both the teacher and students alike have input that shapes and values the expectations of all community members during this practice. Additionally, in Circle Processes the students are taking on a more prominent role, either as the facilitator or a participant, and everyone in the community takes on the role of a teacher and a learner through sharing and listening with others. Thus, these restorative circle activities are a great way to end the week, enabling the entire learning community to reflect, think critically, listen, and be heard. Using circles in these routine ways also build student comfort with the process and with each other and continues to contribute to the construction of a student-centered, caring classroom community.

Under Review: Critical Reflective Practices

<u>Critical Self-Reflection</u>[1]
- How do my identities and background influence decisions I make about what to emphasize in course content, how to teach it, and classroom management practices?
- How might students of linguistic, cultural, racial, and religious backgrounds different from my own respond to my instructional choices, assessment practices, and classroom management strategies and approaches?
- How do my personal experiences with school, family, and work balance shape my expectations of student performance in class and abilities to successfully complete outside-of-class assignments?
- How do my beliefs about personal and community responsibility inform the expectations I have about how students treat the physical space of our classroom?
- How do I shape instructional practices and classroom life in ways that create space for collective expertise, interests, and motivations?

<u>Critical Reflection in Unit Planning</u>[2]
- How frequently do I differentiate instruction? How do I differentiate for equity?
- Do assignment scoring rubrics give inherent advantages for certain ways of knowing and expression?
- Do I allow for differences related to cultural practices with regard to language, speech, reading, and writing to shape my perceptions about students' cognitive abilities?
- Do I create a multitude of ways to evaluate students, using both formative and summative assessments? How often do I incorporate nontraditional means of assessments?
- How often are students given the opportunity to provide input on how they would like to be evaluated on assessments?
- What students are routinely faring poorly in my classes? What have I done to individually support them in equitable ways?

<u>Critical Reflection in Daily Lesson Planning</u>[3]
- Who was successfully engaged in learning during the lesson? How did they take active ownership of their learning? How do I know?
- Who was not successfully engaged in learning during class? What might have been impeding their engagement and ownership in their learning?
- How could the lesson structure be altered to engage more students and provide multiple equitable pathways for success?
- What different instructional strategies could have worked better? How could the students have taken on a more active role?
- What changes could be made to both content and instruction to better facilitate student learning and engagement?

[1]Adapted from Milner (2018, p. 64)
[2]Adapted from Howard (2003, p. 200)
[3]Adapted from Milner (2018, p. 66)

Theoretical Support

This kind of intentional and informed self-reflective questioning throughout different points of the school year allow for planning, instruction, and assessment to be systematically reviewed on a regular basis. It is important to constantly be reflecting upon one's own pedagogy to see how the learning environment can be adjusted to best serve its members. These three-tiered questions serve as a useful tool to see how (and if) teaching is developing and improving to meet the needs of students through equity-oriented approaches in a caring, culturally responsive way. With the first tier of questions, the teacher is critically examining their own biases and beliefs about their students and becoming intentionally cognizant of the impacts that those biases and beliefs have on their teaching and their students. This reflective processes will likely need to be revisited regularly as teachers come to know themselves in more critically aware ways (Milner, 2018). The key here is that teachers are consistently engaging in critically reflective practices that allow them to understand what is happening in the classroom and why.

Practices that allow teachers to reflect upon how they are providing an equitable classroom for students should also be a regular and integral part of the unit planning process (Howard, 2003). The second tier of questions once again assists the teacher in becoming more aware of how they are engaging in their teaching practice and what is going on in the learning environment. This awareness increases the professional pedagogical repertoire, which can then shift how a teacher approaches their daily classroom practices. In terms of the third tier of questioning, critically reflective practices for daily lesson planning help the teacher consider, frame, and attempt to solve possible areas of disconnect with and between students in their daily classroom practice (Zeichner & Liston, 2014). Focusing on issues of equity, access, and student agency in their learning allows teachers to become more attuned to how their students are experiencing learning on a daily basis.

The Network: Peabody College at Vanderbilt University + Twitter

Although this is only my third class at Peabody I know the connections I form here, both with students and faculty members, will be some of the most valuable and crucial connections in my future education practice. In my three short months as a Peabody student I have seen how incredibly kind, generous, and caring everyone in the community is. As someone who has not previously formally studied education nor served as a teacher in a K-12 classroom in the United States I have had a lot of questions emerge throughout this course and others. Some of these center around concerns of the real-life applicability of much of the theory discussed, as well as not being equipped to best serve my students. My fellow Peabody classmates have taken the time to speak with me at length about these and other questions and allowed me to reflect on my motivations and goals as a teacher. I also hope to serve the same supportive role for my classmates and future colleagues. I am thankful to have taken my elective courses with both students from my program (English Language Learners) as well as those from other Peabody programs because it allows me to think about education from different subject/age perspectives and has widened the network of teachers I can support and be supported by.

Another important virtual tool is Twitter. My first class at Peabody (Culturally Responsive Pedagogy with Professor Milner) required that we get a Twitter and post weekly Tweets as part of our class participation grade. While I was a bit surprised at this novel approach to participation I soon found that Twitter gives us access to an enormous corpus of educators in all fields all over the country (and the world). I enjoy following educators who do not share my same identities to get a more diverse and robust perspective on many salient educational issues while expanding my understanding of issues of race, equity, and social justice work in teaching. They often link resources that I plan to use in my future classrooms (i.e. Teaching Tolerance).

Balancing Act: My Life as a Peace Sign

Social Life (friends, family, relationships)   **Professional Life** (work, school, leadership)

(physical) **Self-Care** (mental)

A peace sign is the perfect symbolic representation for the balance I hope to achieve in my life as I seek harmony in three distinct areas, resting upon care of self upward to care of others. At the root and foundation of this balancing act is self-care, which I have divided into two smaller sub-categories of physical and mental. Physical self-care refers to things like eating healthy foods, exercising regularly, and getting enough sleep—the first tier of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Alexander, 2006). Once these needs are addressed I can turn to mental self-care which refers to monitoring my socioemotional health and doing things like meditation and mindfulness practices (Jennings, 2015). Once the self is cared for I can move towards serving others. On one side there is my social and personal life, which includes friends, family, loved ones, and all the commitments that those relationships entail. On the other side is my professional life as an educator and a student, as well as any leadership or mentorship roles.

First Week Plan

Day	Activities

Monday (Day 1)	1) **Greeting Students**
	   a. Greet students at the door, shake their hand, introduce yourself and have them share their name with you, inform them that they may sit wherever they choose to.
	2) **Introducing Myself**
	   a. See activity on p. 21: Share brief introduction and model personal Biopoem
	3) **Introduce Yourself: Biopoems**
	   a. See activity on p. 21
	4) **Co-Constructing Norms**
	   a. See activity on p. 10
	5) **Closing**
	   a. Weekly Journal Reflections (p. 9): Explain purpose and format, distribute journals, share first week prompt: <u>Who is your role model?</u> *Due Friday*
	   b. Keep In Touch: Help Me Get to Know You (p. 23): Distribute handout, explain purpose, answer any questions. *Due by Friday*

Tuesday (Day 2)	1) **Greeting Students**
	   a. As students arrive, greet them by name (as much as possible) and ask for their reflections/reactions/thoughts on the first day of class. What did they like? What did they not like?
	2) **Teamwork Tuesday (First Five): BINGO!**
	   a. See activity/handout on p. 25
	3) **Addressing Behavioral Concerns in the Classroom**
	   a. See handout on p. 12
	   b. Add the completed document to the Syllabus
	4) **Student Questionnaire: My Learning Habits**
	   a. Students individually complete the handout on p. 5 and turn it in to the teacher who is available to answer any questions that may emerge
	5) **Closing**
	   a. Student-Teacher Interview: Getting to Know You (p. 7): Explain the purpose of this activity, pass out a sign-up sheet for each student to select their time slot (a variety of days/times are available)
	   b. Weekly Journal Reflection <u>Who is your role model?</u> *due Friday*
	   c. Help Me Get to Know You: Handout *due by Friday*. Collect completed handouts from students

Wednesday (Day 3)	1) **Greeting Students**
	   a. As students arrive, ask them about their day and how they are feeling at this mid-point in the first week. Do they have any questions or concerns?
	2) **Word Wednesday (First Five):** <u>What's Up?</u>
	   a. Model the Word Wednesday activity using the colloquial term "what's up" as a greeting, include a visual component, have students practice greeting each other with this phrase (see p. 8 for more details)
	   b. Distribute the sign-up sheet for each students to select when they will

	present their Word Wednesday term/phrase, explain all components, answer any lingering questions. *Make sure to write down when each student is presenting to remind them the week of their presentation*
	3) Plagiarism Policy: Academic Honesty
	   a. See handout on p. 15
	   b. Add the completed document to the Syllabus
	4) ELL Content Lesson 1: Introducing Yourself
	   a. Recall/reference the Biopoem activity from Monday
	   b. Present vocabulary words and phrases, model using them
	   c. Students practice words/phrases with teacher as a class
	   d. Students practice words/phrases in pairs
	5) Closing
	   a. Make sure everyone signed up for a week to give their 5 minute Word Wednesday presentations
	   b. Weekly Journal Reflection *due Friday*
	   c. Help Me Get to Know You: Handout *due by Friday*. Collect completed handouts from students

Thursday
(Day 4)
	1) Greeting Students
	   a. As students arrive, ask them how they are progressing on their Weekly Journal Reflection and if you can provide any additional supports
	2) Throwback Thursday (First Five)
	   a. What is the kindest thing you have done? (Activity details on p. 8)
	3) Technology policy
	   a. See handout on p. 14
	   b. Add the completed document to the Syllabus
	4) ELL Application Lesson 1: Introducing Yourself
	   a. Students recall the words/phrases from Lesson 1
	   b. Application Activity: Classmate Speed Dating (students use words/phrases with each other, teacher facilitates)
	5) Closing
	   a. Make sure all students have signed up for a Student-Teacher Interview
	   b. Weekly Journal Reflection *due tomorrow*
	   c. Help Me Get to Know You: Handout *due tomorrow*. Collect completed handouts from students

Friday
(Day 5)
	1) Greeting Students
	   a. As students arrive, ask for their input on how they feel having almost completed their first week of class. What are they most excited for in this course? Is there anything they feel nervous about?
	2) Friend Friday (First Five)
	   a. Activity details on p. 8
	3) Syllabus Overview
	   a. Distribute document to students with completed co-created norms, Addressing Behavioral Concerns in the Classroom (p.12), Plagiarism Policy (p. 15), and Technology Policy (p. 14)
	   b. Review all major assignments/assessments and percentage/point value of each towards the overall course grade

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>

   c. Provide a course calendar with important due dates highlighted so students can plan in advance

4) Weekly Circle Process with Journal Reflections

   a. See News Worthy: Restorative Circle Practices activity on p. 27

   b. The teacher will be the facilitator for this first week

5) Closing

   a. Provide final Student-Teacher Interview schedule, make sure students know when their time slot is

   b. Collect any remaining Help Me Get to Know You handouts

   c. Looking ahead to next week: Teacher will provide the Professional Learning Community (PLC) groupings (see p. 20)

</td></tr>
</table>

References

Alexander, P. A. (2006). *Psychology in Learning and Instruction*. Prentice Hall: New Jersey.

Amstutz, L. S., & Mullet, J. H. (2005). *The little book of restorative discipline for schools:
   Teaching responsibility; creating caring climates*. New York: Good Books.

Boynton, M. & Boynton, C. (2005). *The educator's guide to preventing and solving discipline
   problems.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Brown, T. M. (2007). Lost and turned out: Academic, social, and emotional experiences of
   students excluded from schools. *Urban Education, 42*(5), 432-455. DOI:
   10.1177/0042085907304947

Cammarota, J., & Romero, A. (2006). A critically compassionate intellectualism for Latina/o
   students: Raising voices above the silencing of our schools. *Multicultural Education,
   14*(2), 16-23

Comer, J. P. (1995). *School power: Implications of an intervention project*. Free Press.

Costello, B., Wachtel, J., Wachtel, T. (2010). *Restorative circles in schools: Building community
   and enhancing learning.* Bethlehem, PA: International Institute for Restorative Practices.

Costello, B., Wachtel, J., Wachtel, T. (2009). *The restorative practices handbook for teachers,
   disciplinarians and administrators.* Bethlehem, PA: International Institute for Restorative
   Practices.

Cheryan, S., Ziegler, S. A., Plaut, V. C., & Meltzoff, A. N. (2014). Designing classrooms to
   maximize student achievement. *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences,*
   1 (1), 4 –12.

Cushman, J. (2003). *Fires in the bathroom: Advice for teachers from high school students.* New
   York: New Press.

Duncan-Andrade, J. (2007). Gangstas, wankstas, and ridas: Defining, developing, and supporting
   effective teachers in urban schools. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in
   Education, 20(6)*, 617-683.

Gay, G. (2018). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice.* (Third Edition).
   New York: Teachers College Press.

Gottfried, M.A. (2010). Evaluating the relationship between student attendance and achievement
   in urban elementary and middle schools: An instrumental variables approach. *American
   Educational Research Journal, 47(2)*, 434-465.

Haberman, M. (2010). The pedagogy of poverty versus good teaching. *Phi Delta Kappan, 92*(2), 81-87.

Harris, A. H. (2016). *Getting Off to a Good Start: The First Three Days of School*. (10th Edition) Department of Education.

Hidi, S. (1990). Interest and its contribution as a mental resource for learning. *Review of Educational Research, 60,* 549-571.

Howard, T.C. (2003). Culturally Relevant pedagogy: Ingredients for critical teacher reflection. *Theory Into Practice, 42*(3), 195-202.

Jennings, P. A. (2015). *Mindfulness for Teachers: Simple Skills for Peace and Productivity in the Classroom (The Norton Series on the Social Neuroscience of Education)*. WW Norton & Company.

Johnson, J., & Owen, L. (2013). Reaching a Culturally Diverse Immigrant Population of Adult English Language Learners. *Journal of Adult Education*, *42*(1), 23-29.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children*. (Second Edition). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Lemov, D. (2014). *Teach like a champion 2.0: 62 techniques that put students on the path to college.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Milner, H. R. (2011). Five easy ways to connect with students. *Harvard Education Letter, 27*(1).

Milner, H. R., Cunningham, H. B., Delale-O'Connor, L., & Kestenberg, E. G. (2018). *These kids are out of control: Why we must reimagine classroom management for equity*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Salazar, M. (2013). A humanizing pedagogy: Reinventing the principles and practice of education as a journey toward liberation. *Review of Research in Education*, *37*(1), 121-148.

Souto-Manning, M. (2006). A critical look at bilingualism discourse in public schools: Auto/ethnographic reflections of a vulnerable observer. *Bilingual Research Journal, 29,* 439-458

Stengel, B.S. (2010) The complex case of fear and safe space. *Studies in Philosophy and Education.* 29(6): 523–540.

Tomlinson, C. A. (2014). *The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Wanless, S. B. (2016). The role of psychological safety in human development. *Research in Human Development, 13*(1), 6-14.

Wong, H.K. (1991). *The First Days of School*, Sunnyvale, CA: Harry K. Wong Publications.

Yosso, T. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race, Ethnicity and Education, 81,* 69-91.

Zehr, H. (2015). *Changing lenses: Restorative justice for our times* (25th anniv. Ed.). Harrisonburg, VA: Herald.

Zeichner, K., & Liston, D. P. (2014). *Reflective teaching: An introduction* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.

Appendix C: English Language Learners in Schools and Classrooms

English Language Learners (ELLs) represent an incredibly diverse and growing group of students in the United States. A group that was once expected to succeed when given "equal" access to education, supreme court decisions, education policies, and national discourse have all played important roles in what ELL education and the "ideal" ELL classroom should look like. There are many factors at play that teachers and administrators must take into account when considering how to best serve their ELL populations given that each district, school, and classroom comes with its own unique challenges and opportunities. Across these myriad contexts, however, common factors emerge as central to equitably serving all ELL students: amplifying and honoring their cultural and linguistic resources in all aspects of school life. This includes both parent and community involvement as well as incorporating (and in fact encouraging) native language use in the classroom. When ELL students are able to access their complete repertoire of linguistic and cultural resources, they are granted the "freedom to talk" in the classroom and reach their fullest potentials as learners and as human beings.

Partnerships with students' families and communities is a critical aspect of effective ELL teaching. As seen in *The Importance of Home-School Connection* (Sison, 2011), this partnership can take many different forms, from regular (daily) correspondence with parents on things like homework and student behaviors to home and community visits. The very first step in establishing meaningful partnerships with families is communication; even before the school year begins, teachers can send emails or call students' homes to introduce themselves (Milner et al., 2018). Regular contact with families can help parents feel that the teacher cares about their students and will do whatever they can to help them experience success. Opening up these lines of communication conveys the message that the teacher wants to learn from families and their

own linguistic and cultural knowledge, that can then help the teacher serve students most

effectively. It also shows parents that they are equal partners in supporting student success and

that their input, knowledge, and experience plays an important role in this (Milner et al., 2018).

In many cases, the only time teachers and parents have contact is when there is a serious concern

or issue regarding the student. However, regular communication with parents ensures that both

parties are connecting to share positive news—things the student is doing well, or how they are

growing in the classroom. Ideally, this positive contact happens more frequently than negative

contact, so that families know the teacher sees the many assets each student possesses and that

the teacher genuinely cares about the whole student (Milner et al., 2018).

There are times where additional and more in-depth steps need to be taken to connect

homes and classrooms—through individual visits to students houses. This is important for many

of the same reasons listed above, but an in-person visit can further solidify the link between

families and schools and can lead to a more collaboratively developed plan to best serve a

student. These visits are also important because they can provide more insight into the funds of

knowledge present in a students' out-of-school life. They can lead to a more sophisticated

understanding, on the part of the teacher, of students and their experiences; there is much

educators do not know about their students or families that could be incredibly helpful in the

classroom (Moll et al., 1992). Additionally, home and community visits can establish more deep,

trusting, and long-term relationships between teachers and families.

Information obtained through these visits allow teachers to identify funds of knowledge

that can be used to improve the academic development of ELL students (Moll et al., 1992). As

teachers get to know families and their multitude of assets, teachers can invite them into the

classroom to teach or facilitate in culturally responsive ways from their knowledge, skills, and

experiences (Milner et al., 2018). Parents and families can come into their children's classrooms and share anything from their food, to dance, to poetry. In an ELL classroom, this allows students to feel pride in their own culture while also exposing other students to new ways of thinking and expression. In this space, differences across all facets of students' identities are seen as opportunities to acquire a more profound understanding of the cultures, lives, and experiences of diverse peoples around the world.

There are many different models and paradigms that can be used to support ELL students, including two-way immersion, "English Plus" instruction, and translanguaging, to name a few. Often, what works in one context is not necessarily appropriate or optimal in another. In *Small Town Big Dreams* (Coady, 2019), a small elementary school in Williston, Florida realized that their existing approach to ELL education—placing ELLs in mainstream classrooms with no additional supports—was simply not working, with many ELL students "falling through the cracks." This represented an attempt at an inclusive approach, in which ELLs were spread across multiple classrooms. However, as it became increasingly clear that this approach was not best-serving ELL students, teachers and administrators decided to do something different. They created a self-contained, sheltered ELL classroom in which current and former ELL students with similar language backgrounds were all placed together. In this space, students were able to use their native language (Spanish) to translate words or concepts they did not understand, often in a collaborative manner; students were using more of the linguistic resources available to them.

Incorporating native language into the classroom has many important implications. As one of the fourth-grade students at Williston Elementary explained, "I feel more comfortable in this class because I can…talk the language I came from…forgetting your language and talk in another one that's not yours, that just doesn't make sense." While many schools and programs

serving ELLs are not fully bilingual, there are many positive impacts of students using their first language in the ELL classroom. Research has shown that proficiency in heritage or indigenous languages correlates positively with higher academic English performance, especially when the former is used as a vehicle to facilitate the latter (Gay, 2018). More specifically, well-developed literacy skills in a first language can facilitate second language literacy development in areas like word recognition, vocabulary, and comprehension, among others. Native language use in the ELL classroom can also bridge home to school differences in communication styles and patterns that in turn improves the engagement, motivation, and classroom participation of ELL students (Gay, 2018). There is an incredibly strong link between language, culture, identity and learning; ELL teachers must be very aware of this relationship and of what can happen to students' identities and learning when their language use is restricted.

Multiple communication systems (i.e. bi- or multi-lingualism) can and should be a natural part of high-quality, equitable education for ELL students. One way to accomplish this is through translanguaging, which extends beyond academic content to include intellectual processing skills as well as psychological and emotional benefits (Gay, 2018). Translanguaging can be described as the process of making meaning, shaping experiences, and gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages; in the classroom, this means drawing upon all linguistic resources of a student (Lewis, Jones, & Baker, 2012). It is an "ongoing psycholinguistic process" of going between different linguistic structures and systems and going beyond them; it creates a social space for multilinguals by combining different aspects of their experience and environment, beliefs and ideology, and cognitive and physical capacities into a coordinated and meaningful lived experience (Wei 2011). Even in classrooms where teachers do not possess the same linguistic resources as their students, translingual practices can be

implemented. By favorably engaging and inquiring into students' language practices, teachers can help foster translingual approaches to a variety of domains (i.e. speaking, writing, reading, etc.) and develop the dispositions and openness necessary to do so (Zapata & Laman, 2016).

All ELL students are coming into their classrooms with significant intellectual and cultural gifts and talents (Milner, 2020). It becomes one of the roles (among many) of an effective ELL teacher to not only learn what these gifts and talents are but also to learn how culture is expressed in their students' lives and how they live their worlds (Moll et al., 1992). This can be accomplished only by first establishing authentic, meaningful relationships with families through consistent communication as well as home visits. The insights acquired from these partnerships allow teachers to more fully understand the funds of knowledge present in their students' lives. Honoring and incorporating native language use in the ELL classroom, whether via translanguaging or other bilingual approaches, is another important step. Regardless of personal, resource, or policy restrictions, classrooms and schools can still cultivate a multilingual environment that welcomes and supports the use of home languages and provides ELL students with opportunities to engage with peers in their own languages.

References

Coady, M. [Maria Coady]. (2019, December 5). *Small Town Big Dreams* [Video]. YouTube.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qP4sbLce5sM&feature=youtu.be&ab_channel

Gay, G. (2018). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice*. Teachers

College Press.

Lewis, G., Jones, B., & Baker, C. (2012). Translanguaging: Developing its conceptualisation and

contextualisation. *Educational Research and Evaluation, 18*(7), 655-670.

Milner, H.R. (2020). *Start where you are but don't stay there: Understanding diversity,*

opportunity gaps, and teaching in today's classrooms. (Second Edition). Cambridge:

Harvard Education Press.

Milner, H. R., Cunningham, H. B., Delale-O'Connor, L., & Kestenberg, E. G. (2018). *These kids*

are out of control: Why we must reimagine classroom management for equity. Thousand

Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching:

Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into*

practice, *31*(2), 132-141.

Sisson, J. [cristinaigoaedd]. (2011, July 25). *The Importance of Home-School Connection*

[Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eelv2jdpLOA&ab_channel

Wei, L. (2011). Moment analysis and translanguaging space: Discursive construction of

identities by multilingual Chinese youth in Britain. *Journal of Pragmatics, 43*, 1222-53.

Zapata, A., & Laman, T.T. (2016). "I write to show how beautiful my languages are":

Translingual Writing Instruction in English-Dominant Classrooms. *Language Arts, 93*(5),

366-378.

Appendix D: Case Study of an English Language Learner

Part I: The Learner

Elisa Gonzalez[1] is a native Spanish speaker originally from Colombia. Despite having some limited exposure to English in high school, she remembers very little from her classes. Now in her mid-forties, Elisa has lived in the United States for over twenty years, all of which have been spent in Nashville. She started learning English around fifteen years ago when her oldest son started school; she was motivated by a desire to be able to communicate with his teachers. She taught herself using the limited resources at her disposal, including instructional English DVDs and English movies, television shows, and music. Over the past two years, Elisa has been taking adult English as a Second Language (ESL) classes through Conexión Américas, a local non-profit organization. She receives classes twice per week and after five semesters is now in the most advanced level offered. Both of Elisa's children are fully bilingual in Spanish and English, however Spanish is the dominant language at home. Elisa and her husband own an international money transfer business. The vast majority of the clientele are Spanish-speaking as well, although from a variety of countries with different accents and dialectal features. As a result, most of Elisa's daily life, both at work and at home, is conducted in Spanish.

Part II: Learner's Oral Language Abilities

Pragmatics

There was a clear evolution of the social context, or the relationship between speakers (us), across our three conversations. Perhaps because Elisa perceived our first meeting to be more of an interview, she mostly just answered the questions I posed to her and did not ask me anything even though I said she was welcome to. However, throughout our second and third meetings the social context adopted less of an interviewer-interviewee dynamic and shifted

[1]EL's name has been changed

to a more friendly and casual one. Both of us asked and responded to questions from each other in turn. By our third meeting, we ended up speaking for over forty-five minutes and were able to reference topics that we had touched on previously, such as Elisa visiting her son in Knoxville: "Yeah. We, we went two weeks ago. Do you remember? I told you I went for him…" (Visit 3, lines 47-50). In terms of the situational context, even though we were meeting virtually we were still able to reference specific situational elements, such as the changing of the leaves in fall (Visit 2, lines 184-187) or the local radio station "ninety-two nine" (Visit 1, line 216).

Throughout our conversations, Elisa adhered to some of Grice's maxims more than others. In terms of quantity, her responses tended to be more informative than what was necessary to answer the posed question. In thinking about quality, this maxim was well-adhered to, given that Elisa was often providing details about her own life and experiences. The maxim of relation was also adhered to somewhat well, albeit not perfectly. Much of what Elisa spoke about, while not necessarily explicitly elicited by the question, was used as illustrative examples to support her responses (i.e. Visit 1, lines 174-181). Finally, the manner maxim was adhered to in the sense that she avoided obscurity and ambiguity, but at times did not demonstrate brevity or orderliness in her speech. For example, when I asked her if she spoke more English or Spanish at work she replied, "…I got more, you know, if I have to speak more English maybe I will be oh yeah, more fluently now then I yeah but I no…" (Visit 1, lines 141-142).

Another notable feature of our conversations was Elisa's consistent use of pragmatic markers such as "you know," which often indicates that knowledge is being treated as shared between the speaker and listener (Yule, 2017). Elisa also used the pragmatic marker "I don't know," typically to show her own hesitancy of or uncertainty in her knowledge of specific words in English. Despite the challenges of the virtual format of our meetings, Elisa was able to receive

and interpret indications that I wanted to speak. For example, when I made short repeated sounds while she was talking or used bodily shifts or facial expressions to signal that I had something to say (Yule, 2017), she would often pause or finish speaking so I could pose a question or add a comment. Although Elisa generally spoke more during our conversations than I did, she was still cognizant of the conventions of turn-taking.

Areas that need further development are those linked with the maxims of quantity and manner, however some of these infractions may be due to her own cultural norms of conversation. While the essence of Grice's maxims as conventions may be universal across languages and cultures, their implementation and the way they mix with other societal norms can vary drastically between societies (Dawson & Phelan, 2016). Thus, it is important to consider how Elisa's own Colombian sociocultural and linguistic conventions, as well as her warm and outgoing personality, may be informing her language use across our conversations.

Phonology

There were a few main pronunciation variants in Elisa's speech that can be heard throughout all three of our meetings. One feature was the swapping of the postalveolar voiceless consonants /tʃ/ and /ʃ/. This was most clearly demonstrated in her pronunciation of the word unforshunately (unfortunately), which is typically pronounced by native English speakers using /tʃ/, as in /ʌnˈfɔːtʃʊnətli/. Elisa's pronunciation of the word as /ʌnˈfɔːʃʊnətli/ (with /ʃ/) (Visit 1, line 140; Visit 2, line 58; Visit 3, line 87) is intriguing given that the /tʃ/ sound (that she did not use) is present in Spanish whereas /ʃ/, which she used to pronounce "unfortunately," is not found in her native language (Gibbons, 2015). A similar tendency was observed with her pronunciation of words like ish (each) and orshar (orchard) where the /tʃ/ became a /ʃ/ (Visit 2, lines 164 and

191). Elisa did pronounce "she" (/ʃi/) as chi (/ʧi/) (Visit 2, line 163), demonstrating the speech pattern one would expect to see from a native Spanish speaker in English (Gunning, 2013).

Another variant emerged in Elisa's pronunciation of the dental fricative consonants /θ/ ("theta") and /ð/ ("eth") (Yule, 2017, p. 30). While both sounds are present in certain dialects of Spanish, the /θ/ distinction is not found in most Latin American Spanishes (Obaid, 1973). Demonstrating considerable metalinguistic awareness, Elisa explained that "…everything is like a "s" for us, you know?" Because /θ/ is not found in her Colombian Spanish, one would expect her to have difficulty pronouncing th-words in English, however this was not the case. The pattern that emerged in her pronunciation was one of generally pronouncing the /ð/ like a native English speaker, as in /ðæt/ or /ðəm/, whereas the /θ/ posed more of a challenge and often became /t/ (i.e. ting instead of thing). Elisa tended to produce /θɪŋ/ when it was preceded by every-, any-, or some- (and thus became easier intervocalically), whereas she was more likely to use /tɪŋ/ when the word was spoken by itself (Visit 1, line 57; Visit 2, lines 96 and 111).

Elisa also pronounced words beginning with /s/ as /es/, for example with espanish (Spanish) (Visit 1, line 103), eschool (school) (Visit 2, line 43), and estart (start) (Visit 3, line 144). This is likely because few words in Spanish begin with an /s/ + consonant cluster; thus, this speech variant is common among native Spanish-speaking English Learners (ELs) (Case, 2012). For words ending in /v/, Elisa tended to pronounce them with a final voiceless labiodental fricative /f/ sound, as in haf (have) (Visit 1, line 45) and lif (live) (Visit 2, line 55). This is not necessarily surprising, given that the voiced labiodental fricative /v/ is not present in Spanish. In /v/ ending words preceded by the /ai/ vowel diphthong, she completely eliminated the final /f/ sound. Instead, words ended with an elongated vowel sound, such as arrai (arrive) (Visit 2, line 70) and fai (five) (Visit 3, line 21). As discussed in class during the Phonology module, Elisa

may be engaging in the process of dissimilation wherein the final sounds of words are dropped to save time and articulatory effort. Additionally, because many (but not all) words in Spanish end in vowel sounds, the /ai/ diphthong ending may be easier or more natural for Elisa to produce. However, in doing this it is possible that native English speakers would not be able to understand her speech. Thus, this is one of the main areas that need further development.

While this pronunciation feature and the others mentioned previously occurred throughout our conversations, in most cases they did not impact the comprehensibility of Elisa's speech. She demonstrates considerable ability in both the fluency and coherence of her speech, often being able to self-correct without any prompting or guidance on my part. Interestingly, some of the pronunciation variants in her speech are not consistent with the phonology of her first language. This may have to do with the primarily informal, English-dominant contexts in which she has learned much of her second language as well as the number of years that she has been living in the US.

Grammar

Elisa had a mean length of utterance (MLU) for a selection of 100 oral utterances (as indicated by phrase-final intonation) from our third conversation of 10.68. Her informal writing sample (117 words) had an MLU of 17.14, while the formal sample (106 words) had an MLU of 16.86. In her writing samples, Elisa tended to express multiple ideas in one utterance, whereas while speaking she typically expressed one idea per utterance. This may explain why her written language MLUs were higher than her oral language MLU. It is not surprising that both writing samples had similar MLUs given that Elisa's exposure to more formal, academic English (both spoken and written) is fairly limited.

The most commonly occurring morphemes that Elisa used well in her speech were the bound inflectional –'s (possessive) and –s (plural), for example with "son's" and "friends" (Visit 3, lines 47 and 96). She also used the bound inflectional morphemes –ed and –ing frequently, as in "started" and "thinking" (Visit 3, lines 27 and 106). She used both lexical and functional morphemes well throughout her speech and writing, likely a reflection of where instruction is targeted in her adult ESL classes. One area that could be further developed is the morphological complexity of her spoken and written words; she used almost no derivational morphemes (such as re- or -ness) (Yule, 2017). One of the only examples of a morphologically complex word in her speech was "unfortunately" (Visit 3, line 87), containing two derivational morphemes (un- and -ly), and from her writing "professionalism" (in the formal sample), with -al and -ism.

In terms of syntactic abilities, Elisa used the same few basic linking devices to connect her speech. The most commonly occurring were "and," "but," and "so," which she often used at the beginning of utterances. Whereas others may use a variety of logical linking devices to serve additive, enumerative, inferential, or transitional purposes, Elisa used these same words (often together) for all these functions. For example, "So the people say things like that so you know. And so that was the day the doctor told me so we was waiting for that day. But, but yeah…" (Visit 3, lines 35-36). In her informal writing sample, Elisa used a small number of linking devices, such as "also" and "of course," however such words were completely absent in her formal writing. Both common and academic connectives, which play an important role in linking ideas and clarifying meaning, were not found in either writing sample (Crosson & Lesaux, 2013). In conversation Elisa used some temporal connectives, such as "before" and "after" (Visit 3, lines 26 and 33), however any additive, causal, or adversative relationships in her speech were

connected using and, but, and so. Thus, both the complexity and variety of linking devices in her speech and writing need further development, in academic as well as conversational contexts.

The basic linear order of constituents in English is Noun Phrase-Verb-Noun Phrase (NP V NP) and their typical grammatical functions are Subject-Verb-Object, or SVO (Yule, 2017). Spanish is also mostly (though not always) an SVO language (Erichsen, 2018). These similarities in language typology enabled Elisa to use word order well in her statements, for example with "I was pregnant" and "…the doctor told me…" (Visit 3, lines 20 and 36). She demonstrated similar strengths in her writing samples. Elisa was skilled in forming questions, as seen when she asked "…when are you finished with your classes?" and "you can…continue your classes from there? (Visit 3, lines 60 and 66). She also showed skills with "do" questions as in "do you remember?" (Visit 3, line 48) and wh-questions with "…what we are going to make?" (Visit 3, lines 134). Her ability to successfully navigate a variety of complex question forms is further evidence of her considerable grammatical proficiency in English.

Elisa used negation well with both "not" and "don't," as in "Venezuela is not a very good place…" (Visit 2, line 83) and "I don't understand how to respond…" (Visit 1, line 205). However, she occasionally overextended the use of don't, for example with "we don't going" (Visit 3, lines 76 and 175). This suggests that "don't" may have been learned as a fixed entity and not in the generative way of negating modal verbs. Additionally, the auxiliary verb "do" (and its negative form "don't") does not exist in Spanish, so the overextension is not surprising. Elisa successfully adhered to English word order in complex clauses in both her speaking and writing, as seen with "This will be the first birthday that my son is not here at home" (Visit 3, line 44) and "I can only imagine how hard it must be to teach adults, I'm sure it's not easy…" from her formal writing sample.

There are many similarities between Elisa's oral and written language performance; her overall strengths and areas needing further development are consistent across both. This is likely due to the fact that she has had limited exposure to academic English, and thus her written work parallels her oral language more than someone who has had formal instruction in academic writing. This is not to say that her speech and writing are identical; her writing is at times more clear and lexically complex than her speech. However, they share many features and as a result are morphologically comparable.

Semantics

The selection of conversation that was analyzed for semantics comes from our first meeting (Visit 1, lines 189-205). In this excerpt, Elisa discussed her English language learning journey and some of the obstacles that she had to overcome. Given that this was a casual conversation between us, her word choice is perfectly appropriate and adequate for the context. Because she was describing an experience that was very personal and in fact quite challenging, Elisa used a lot of emotive language such as "I feel more confident" (Visit 1, line 201), "we always got scared" (line 203) and "I'm doing better now" (line 205). More formal word choice would have seemed disconnected in the context of such an emotionally-charged topic.

Elisa's vocabulary in the selected excerpt of conversation includes more general and everyday words as opposed to specialized or academic vocabulary. However, she does demonstrate a solid knowledge of the meanings of the words she used, some of which are more advanced and specific to language-learning (i.e. "communicate" and "pronunciation"). This solid word knowledge is reflected in the depth of her vocabulary, meaning that she has a clear command of the words she used. In general, the diversity or "breadth" of her vocabulary, on the other hand, is not as apparent. This is likely a reflection of the largely informal contexts through

which she has learned and uses her second language. As she elaborated on in our conversation, she spent over a decade teaching herself English using instructional DVDs and watching movies and television in English. It was not until two years ago that she began more formal English classes. Although Elisa now utilizes some general academic words in her course, discipline or domain-specific vocabulary is largely beyond the scope of what she currently needs. As Coxhead (2016) explains, discipline-specific vocabulary is such that ELs do not tend to encounter this vocabulary outside of their academic studies.

The conception of "words as tools" is useful in Elisa's case because it refers to approaching words as means for communicating and thinking about context (Nagy & Townsend, 2012). Elisa began learning English with the specific communicative purpose of speaking with her children's teachers; this requires a knowledge of general academic vocabulary. Learning academic language can thus help Elisa do new things with language and acquire new tools for these purposes. Thus, even though she may not need to use domain-specific vocabulary for a particular discipline, she still needs to be able to successfully navigate the dense, abstract, metaphoric, and morphologically complex words found in academic language.

A lexical diversity tool (UsingEnglish.com) was used to analyze the selection from our conversation. The text had a total of 268 words and included 120 different words. There was an average of 24.4 words per sentence with a lexical density of 44.78. According to the tool, this is a less lexically dense text because it falls in the middle of the "lower lexical density" range of around 40-50%. The selection received a score of 11.69 on the Gunning Fog Index, which indicates the number of years of formal education an individual would need to easily understand the text at first reading.

Elisa's speech did not exhibit most features of academic language. She used few morphologically complex words beyond the bound inflectional morpheme -ing (i.e. "feeling," "starting," and "working"). There were almost no grammatical metaphors, including nominalizations. The distribution of nouns, adjectives, and prepositions was similar to that of casual conversational discourse. Finally, her speech was not very abstract and included few domain-specific words beyond "disc" and "DVDs" (technology). Elisa did, however, use some academic words and phrases to address temporal relations such as "that was the moment," "some months," and "long time." She also used adverbs of frequency like "always" and "never." Thus, Elisa's semantic strengths lie in her ability to express meaning with relevant details in an ordered manner. She possesses solid lexical knowledge and uses the words at her disposal in skillful and contextually-appropriate ways. Elisa needs further development in increasing the breadth and lexical diversity of her vocabulary, both academic and general.

Part III: Assessment of Learner's Current Stage of Second Language Acquisition

The Student Oral Language Observation Matrix, or SOLOM, allows teachers to assess their students' command of oral (English) language. When holistically evaluating an EL's English skills, it is important to consider comprehension, fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. On a scale of one to five, I would give Elisa a score of four in comprehension. As her conversation partner I was able to understand nearly everything she said, and even when her speech deviated from native production, her errors were mostly minor. One exception was the dropping of the final sound (specifically /f/) in some words, however this was an infrequent occurrence. In terms of fluency, Elisa would also receive four points. Her speech was generally fluent, with occasional lapses where she had to take some time to arrive at the native English pronunciation, for example with "taught" and "Knoxville" (Visit 2, lines 41 and 168). For

pronunciation I would also give Elisa four points. Her speech was always intelligible, although she does have an accent that became more pronounced when she encountered some phonological features not present in her first language (i.e. /s/+consonant at the beginning of a word).

In terms of Elisa's grammatical abilities, including both morphological and syntactic performance, I would give her a score of four out of five. While she does occasionally make grammatical errors, they generally do not obscure the greater meaning of her speech (or writing). Her overall strengths are accuracy in word order in statements, complex question formation, and negation. She also demonstrates considerable command of bound inflectional morphemes such as -s, -ed, and -ing. For the final domain, vocabulary, Elisa also receives four points. For the most part, she uses appropriate terms according to the context. If she encounters lexical deficits, she is able to rephrase her ideas and communicate in a clear and organized manner. Elisa's primary limitations in this area are related to the diversity and complexity of her lexicon. Expanding her derivational morpheme repertoire and increasing academic vocabulary would help better connect her thoughts and ideas and increase clarity in her speaking and writing.

Elisa's composite score across the five categories of comprehension, fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary is 20 points out of a possible 25. According to the SOLOM, approximately 19 or 20 points can be considered proficient. Thus, Elisa's SOLOM score of 20 indicates English proficiency with considerable skill in each of the assessed domains. She may soon approach the abilities of a native speaker if future instruction is focused upon targeted, metalinguistic interventions.

Part IV: Instructional Recommendations for Learner

Activities that could help Elisa sharpen her pragmatics skills are ones in which she has to convey specific information within a short time. For example, an instructor can have Elisa

provide directions to a location or instructions on how to make a recipe that cannot exceed five steps/utterances. Or, she is given just thirty seconds to describe everything she sees in a picture or a painting to a listener. These kinds of activities can help Elisa focus her utterances so they adhere better to the maxim of quantity because they do not allow her to be more informative than is required or to "over-answer" the question. Additionally, they sharpen her skills in relation to the manner maxim by forcing her to be clear, brief, and orderly in her speech. She could also benefit from summarizing things she reads, hears, or sees; by focusing on main ideas and eliminating superfluous details Elisa can continue to cultivate her skills in pragmatics.

In terms of phonology, further development should be deliberately and metalinguistically targeted at specific areas. For example, with the initial /s/ an instructor can identify words in Elisa's native language starting with that sound and help her isolate the initial sound and practice it in an exaggerated manner (i.e. *sssssol).* Elisa can then alternate initial-/s/ words in Spanish and English while focusing on the target sound (i.e. *ssssol*, sssschool). Gradually, she can reduce the length of the elongated /s/ to just the short initial /s/ produced by native English speakers. Instructors should also help Elisa cultivate her metalinguistic awareness so she can better understand her errors and work to correct them. Along with an instructor, she can listen to a recording of her speech (for example, our conversations) while the teacher points out some of the most common variants she produces (i.e. /θ/ as /t/ in "thing" or /ʃ/ instead of /ʧ/ in "unfortunately"). With a more deliberately focused awareness through guided listening, Elisa can generalize her native English pronunciation moving forward.

Elisa should study morphemes in her native language to increase and diversify her morphemic knowledge and foster her metalinguistic awareness. Additionally, a comparison of morphemes in her L1 and L2 facilitated by a bilingual instructor can highlight differences in the

way a word's meaning is shared between the two languages (Lems et al., 2017). Comparing

derivational morphemes, in particular, would expose Elisa to new words and to new concepts

found within the words. Instructional tools like charts, word walls, and word webs (among

others) can be helpful in organizing and optimizing this content. Improved morphological

understanding can also increase Elisa's academic vocabulary, given that the meanings of 60% of

words can be figured out using knowledge of the units of meaning (i.e. -ous or -ness) that make

up the word (Goodwin & Perkins, 2015). The complexity and range of linking devices in Elisa's

speech and writing can be developed through targeted instruction with activities like analyzing

short texts to discern the meanings of common and academic connectives. Seeing these

connectives used in-context can help Elisa develop a deeper understanding of the words and

better retain their meaning.

Semantically speaking, Elisa's vocabulary instruction should be relevant to the specific

needs of her life. Instructors can be guided by her direct feedback on what vocabulary and/or

disciplines would be most useful, beginning with high-frequency words first (Coxhead, 2012).

Activities such as narrow reading (of textbooks or journal articles, for example) can help her

build relevant content knowledge and increase exposure to discipline-specific vocabulary.

Instruction should also provide Elisa with opportunities to encounter target vocabulary in reading

and listening (meaning-focused input) and to use this vocabulary productively in speaking and

writing (meaning-focused output) (Coxhead, 2016). There are many ways that vocabulary can be

organized to facilitate comprehension and production, such as creating a vocabulary box with

word cards of target items, word walls, and semantic maps, among others. Overall, instructors

should engage with Elisa in co-constructing her knowledge of the academic register and

explicitly highlight the functionality of academic language resources (Uccelli & Galloway,

2017). This will enable her to see how expanding relevant lexical, syntactic, and discourse

structures can support more clear, concise, and connected expression. Listening to Elisa's input

on what she already knows about language and inviting her to reflect upon this knowledge can be

both an insightful and highly engaging activity (Uccelli & Galloway, 2017).

Part V: Critical Reflection

        The lessons I have learned from this case study hold important implications for my

future pedagogical practice. The first significant take-away I have from this experience is the

need to develop a holistic and comprehensive understanding of students' abilities in all

domains. In other words, I must know my students and their skillsets well. While this may not

be a particularly profound observation, I hope to incorporate it in teaching my students to each

of their individual strengths and needs. This process has further illuminated the importance of

targeted and differentiated assessment for EL students as well. For example, in analyzing

Elisa's written (formal and informal) and oral language samples I was able to systematically

explore the differences and commonalities between them. This shows me that ELs' abilities

need to be assessed multi-modally and through a variety of diverse pathways to reveal the full

spectrum of their language skills. Ultimately, analyzing Elisa's pragmatic, phonological,

grammatical, and semantic abilities in English revealed how different domains of language

influence and inform one another.

        Through my conversations with Elisa I observed how the context of her language

learning affected her abilities. Thus, another significant take-away is that context is important.

In my future work with ELs, I need to make sure I understand the myriad factors that may be

influencing their learning. These could range from their motivations to learn the language, to

family and work commitments, to access to quality input in English, among others. I can

obtain this knowledge and best serve ELs by knowing them not only as students but also as people. Just as Elisa and I began to form a friendship throughout the course of our three conversations, so do I hope to engage in meaningful interactions with my future students. By knowing my students better as individuals, I will be able to better serve them as their teacher.

A third take-away from this case study experience is that I should not shy away from teaching more advanced or academic vocabulary, even relatively early on in the English language learning process. In my previous work as a teaching assistant at an intensive English language program with adult ELs, I always worked with the most beginner-level students. Reflecting upon my instruction, I realize that I may not have challenged my students as much as I could have out of fear of overwhelming them. In working with Elisa I saw how insufficient exposure to certain complex aspects of English (i.e. academic vocabulary, derivational morphemes) can manifest themselves in other aspects of language use as well. With my future students, I believe I can teach these more "advanced" topics to cultivate metalinguistic awareness and help students see how their language use in all areas is intricately interconnected. Given that I hope to continue working with adult ELs moving forward, I immensely appreciate the unique opportunities this case study has afforded me and will eagerly incorporate what I have learned into my future teaching.

References

Case, A. (2012, July). *Pronunciation Problems for Spanish-Speaking Learners of English*.

TEFLnet. https://www.tefl.net/elt/articles/teacher-technique/spanish-speaker-

pronunciation-problems/

Coxhead, A. (2012). Specialised vocabulary in secondary school classrooms: Teachers'

perspectives. In H. Pillay and M. Yeo (eds.), *Teaching language to learners of different

age groups* (pp. 194-205). Singapore: SEAMEAO Regional Language Centre.

Coxhead, A. (2016). Approaches and perspectives on teaching vocabulary for discipline-specific

academic writing. *Discipline-Specific Writing: Theory Into Practice*, 62.

Crosson, A. C., & Lesaux, N. K. (2013). Connectives. *The Reading Teacher, 67*(3), 193-200.

Dawson, H., & Phelan, M. (2016). *Language files: Materials for an introduction to language

and linguistics*, Twelfth Edition. The Ohio State University Press.

Erichsen, G. (2018, September 20). *A Linguistic Look at Spanish*. ThoughtCo.

https://www.thoughtco.com/a-linguistic-look-at-spanish-3079195

Gibbons, J. (2015, October 14). The IPA for Spanish Language Learning: Consonants [Blog

post]. Retrieved from https://blogs.transparent.com/spanish/the-ipa-for-spanish-language-

learning-consonants/

Goodwin, A., & Perkins, J. (2015) Word detectives: Morphological instruction that supports

academic language. *The Reading Teacher, 68(7)*, 510-523.

Gunning, C. (2013). *Creating literacy instruction for all children in grades Pre-K to 4*.

Baltimore, MD: Pearson.

Lems, K., Miller, L.D., Soro, T.M. (2017). Using morphemes to learn vocabulary. *Building*

Literacy with English language learners: Insights from linguistics (pp. 112-139). NY,

NY: Guilford.

Nagy, W., & Townsend, D. (2012). Words as tools: Learning academic vocabulary as language

acquisition. *Reading Research Quarterly, 47,* (1), 91-108.

Obaid, A. H. (1973). The Vagaries of the Spanish "S". *Hispania*. 60-67.

Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM). Bilingual Education Office, California

Department of Education.

Uccelli, P., & Phillips Galloway, E. (2017). Academic Language Across Content Areas: Lessons

from an Innovative Assessment and from Students' Reflections About Language. *Journal

of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 60*(4), 395-404.

Yule, G. (2017). *The study of language*, 6th edition. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University

Press.

Appendix E: Student Oral Language Observation Matrix

SOLOM Teacher Observation Student Oral Language Observation Matrix					
Student's Name:				Grade:	Date:
Language Observed:			Administered By (signature):		
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
A. Comprehension	Cannot be said to understand even simple conversation.	Has great difficulty following what is said. Can comprehend only social conversation spoken slowly and with frequent repetitions.	Understands most of what is said at slower-than-normal speed with repetitions.	Understands nearly everything at normal speech. Although occasional repetition may be necessary.	Understands everyday conversation and normal classroom discussions.
B. Fluency	Speech so halting and fragmentary as to make conversation virtually impossible.	Usually hesitant: often forced into silence by language limitations.	Speech in everyday conversation and classroom discussion frequently disrupted by the student's search for the correct manner of expression	Speech in everyday conversation and classroom discussions generally fluent, with occasional lapses while the student searches for the correct manner of expression.	Speech in everyday conversation and classroom discussions fluent and effortless; approximating that of a native speaker.
C. Vocabulary	Vocabulary limitations so extreme as to make conversation virtually impossible.	Misuse of words and very limited: comprehension quite difficult.	Student frequently uses wrong words: conversation somewhat limited because of inadequate vocabulary.	Student occasionally uses inappropriate terms and/or must rephrase ideas because of lexical inadequacies.	Use of vocabulary and idioms approximate that of a native speaker.
D. Pronunciation	Pronunciation problems so severe as to make speech virtually unintelligible.	Very hard to understand because of pronunciation problems. Must frequently repeat in order to make him/herself understood.	Pronunciation problems necessitate concentration on the part of the listener and occasionally lead to misunderstanding.	Always intelligible, although the listener is conscious of a definite accent and occasional inappropriate intonation patterns.	Pronunciation and intonation approximate that of a native speaker.
E. Grammar	Errors in grammar and word order so severe as to make speech virtually unintelligible.	Grammar and word order errors make comprehension difficult. Must often rephrase and/or restrict him/herself to basic patterns.	Makes frequent errors of grammar and word order that occasionally obscure meaning.	Occasionally makes grammatical and/or word order errors that do not obscure meaning.	Grammar and word order approximate that of a native speaker.